



The Primitive Institution :
O R,
A Seasonable
DISCOURSE
Ed. 2 OF *Taylor*
CATECHIZING.

Wherein is shewn,
The ANTIQUITY, BENEFITS
and NECESSITY thereof:

TOGETHER
With its Suitableness to heal
the Present Distempers of
this National CHURCH.

By LANCELOT ADDISON,
D. D. Dean of *Litchfield*.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N: Printed for William Crook,
at the Green Dragon without Temple-
Bar, near Devereux-Court, and W.
Baylie, in Litchfield. 1690.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

OF

A SCALABLE

DISCOURSE

OF THE
CATECHIZING

WHICH IS

THE FIRST PART OF THE
CATECHIZING

TOGETHER

WITH THE
THE FIRST PART OF THE
CATECHIZING

BY JACQUES
D. D. DEAN OF BIRMINGHAM

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LONDON: Printed for William Wood
at the Green Dragon without Temple
Bar, near St. Dunstons Church, and W.
Baker, in Lincoln's Inn, 1820.

TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God,

SETH,

Lord Bishop of S A R U M.

My LORD,

YOUR Name is here prefixed
to the Ensuing Discourse,
neither for *Charm* nor *Amu-*
let, to save it from the Rude and
Censorious; for it doth not at all
regard what Entertainment it meets
with at such hands. But it assumes
this Honour upon the Account of
its Author, who having the Happi-
ness to be one of your Diocesan
Clergy, thinks all he can perform

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in

The Epistle Dedicatory.

in that Relation, ought to be devoted to your Lordship, as a sincere Testimony of his bounden acknowledging your Paternal Government.

I need not represent to your Lordship the many and great Evils which are befallen this Church, through a want of duly observing what this Discourse commends. For as your *Singular Prudence* labours to redress, and your *Pious Soul* deeply resents them; so your *Great Discernment* plainly sees that they are scarce (now) to be removed by any other Method, but a timely, diligent and *Regular Catechising*. And that the most likely means to establish Truth and Holiness with *Posterity*, is firmly and early to imprint the *Younger Minds*, who are the hopes of Religion, with that Catechism which our Church out of her singular prudence and affection hath provided for them.

But I may not pursue this, lest I should too much fault in the Laws of Dedication; which oblige me
to

The Epistle Dedicatory.

to admire and praise that Apostolical Care, Prudence, Candor, and Severity, which are Eminent in your Lordship's Government; and which I dare scarce name, for fear I should offend that *Heroick Modesty* and *Lowliness* so conspicuous in your *Great Conduct*. Besides, I am so averse to the usual Modes of Dedication, that I cannot comply with them in any thing, unless in my hearty Prayers for your Lordship's *Good Health*, and *Long Life*; and in testifying to the World that I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most Humble

and most Devoted Servant,

LANC. ADDISON.

TO

TO THE
READER.

THE Condition of this small Treatise is so little agreeable to the present Genius of the Age, that there needs no great Sagacity to foretel its Entertainment. But those who value Books not by their Dress and Fashion, but Matter and Usefulness; and who look not so much upon what will take with a corrupt Generation, as help to amend it; when they maturely weigh the Subject and Design of the Ensuing Papers, instead of censuring, will be ready to resent the weak management of so concerning a Theme, and pity to see it fall into the hands of so unskilful an Artificer.

For which this is the only Apology, That what is here written, was not intended for Perfection, but Essay;
and

To the Reader.

and that it had never left its retirement, had it not been forced thence by impulse of the present Necessity. For it is too evident, that this is a Season which not only warrants, but exacts our greatest endeavours to persuade to such things as may beget, restore, and establish Truth and Union among us. And that Catechising by a more peculiar Energy is thereunto subservient, appears upon this account, that the Church in all Ages has used it to that purpose.

The raising up of which Institution (so disastrously fallen in our Borders) in hopes of the great edification which thereby will accrue unto this Church, as it was the first motive of this Essay, so it is the last Design; for which I shall think my self largely recompenc'd, if by this contributed Mite, I may provoke the more able to cast richer gifts into the same Corban.

If what I now write of were to be backt with the Example either of professed Infidels or Romanists, I could from a long Conversation with both
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To the Reader.

produce their unwearied care in Catechising; to which I ever thought the paucity of Converts both from Infidelity and Romanism ought chiefly to be imputed.

The Mahometans (as in another Discourse I have observed) have their Bustadarif, out of which the younger sort are trained up in the Principles of a Mussulman. And the Jews Sepher Chinnuck, and Sepher Ikkarim yield sufficient attestation that they are no Truands in this School.

The Romanists from being our Rivals in this particular, are become our Masters; for not only the Jesuits, but also other Religious, glory to have made Catechising their Profession; only with this difference, That the Jesuits Catechise the Rich and Ingenious, and other Orders the Poor and Dull. But their Diligence herein first sprang from an imitation of ours. For till on Sundays and Holy-days we both preach'd in the Morning and Catechis'd in the Afternoon,

To the Reader.

noon, the Papists did neither. And it was undeniably happy with the Protestant Religion, when diligent Catechising was the chief Engine employed to supplant Popery, and give deeper Roots to the Reformation.

But Catechising (as all things else, whereof human weakness hath the Custody and Government) is greatly fallen from that Observation which it had once in this Church; yet methinks if nothing else, this alone should provoke us to a little more diligence in this excellent Institution, to see our Adversaries manage it to our reproach and damage.

But, Reader, in Mercy to your Patience, I will only add, That the Author is none of those who impose upon others what they will not do themselves; for he is a constant Labourer in that Vineyard, wherein he desires his Brethren to take a little more pains.

Next,

To the Reader.

Next, That he is really of Opinion, the Minister may sleep with a good Conscience of having well discharged his Duty, when every Lords-day, he observes (as he is bound) the Churches 59. Canon. And as for those who do otherwise, he leaves them to the Reflexions of their own Breasts.

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T H E

THE
Primitive Institution.

The INTRODUCTION.

THat in the same Church and Nation, there should be no less Ostentation and Noise of Religion and Holiness among some, than of Profaneness and Impiety among others, will prove a matter of no great wonder to such as duly enquire into the causes of both: Especially when it is considered, that as Ignorance may be the Mother of blind Devotion, so it may be likewise of desperate Presumption; because all Iniquity among Men, proceeds from the want of a right knowledge of God. And as the Foundation of all true Happiness, and of all true Religion, which is the proper means of attaining it, grows from a right Opinion touching things Divine; so the misapprehension thereof is the ground of all Misery; and of

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2 **The Primitive Institution.**

all those Vices by which it is occasioned.

But that which may justly awaken in us a greater wonder, is, to see all those Methods proving ineffectual which have been so powerfully manag'd for the removal of this pernicious misapprehension; and that we should be still as much under the same Distempers both in Judgment and Manners, as if nothing had been administred for the cure of either. That our own Church in this Age (which for its wickedness seems to be the last) doth make careful Provision, both for the present and future welfare of her Children, is a truth apparent to all that with unprejudiced Minds peruse her holy Offices, Catechism, Articles, Homilies, Rubricks, and Canons. For how meanly soever some may think hereof, yet if they were once thoroughly considered in their circumstances, we shall find that such a prudent and affectionate care is taken therein, that both our Opinions and Lives may be duly informed and regulated, as in no Church of a particular Denomination can be parallel'd. So very that it cannot but be admired, how deep any of this Church should be either *Vicious* or *Erraneous*; considering that there

there is nothing wanting on the Churches part, that may keep our Actions Vertuous, and Sentiments Orthodox.

But as in matters of the *Civil State*, many Evils arise from a neglect, or remiss execution of those Laws which are appointed to prevent and suppress them: So in the Church, a lack of seeing her Institutions duly observed, when there wanted no circumstances to exact it, may claim a large share in her present Disorders. For, the letting of Discipline be too loose, emboldened not a few to break it. However, leaving the mischiefs that accrue from this, and the unhandfom and cold Celebration of the *Divine-Service*; the neglect of guiding Sermons by the Articles; the almost utter disusage of the Homilies; the lame observance of the Rubricks, and slight execution of the Canons of the Church: leaving, I say, these for the Animadversion of others, I shall only take notice that the omission, or lazy and lukewarm use of Catechising, ought to be blamed, for much of that Visciousness and Error, which is so sadly visible both in Conversation and Judgment. And I am how deeply ingaged in this Perswasion, that either publick Catechising fall under a diligent, constant, and unanimous

B 1 Practice,

Practice, there is but little likelihood of ever seeing that Union and Holiness, Peace and Truth, flourish in this Church, for which she was once so famous.

Now that those to whom the great charge of Souls is consigned, may be awaken'd to a little more vigour and diligence in Catechising, and that they would shake off that Supineness, which in this case they cannot retain, but to the aggravation of their own Guilt, and the encrease of the Churches Misery: And that every Station of Men, moved with the Sense of *Duty* and *Emolument*, may contribute to the raising up of the fallen Practice of Catechising, is the Design and Aim of the ensuing Discourse: wherein no Method at all was projected, but every thing spoken to as it freely offered it self. And as for *Ends*, the Searcher of Hearts knows, there was none other purposed in the Publication hereof, but Gods Glory, and the Edification of his Church.

CHAP.

C H A P. I.

Of Carechising. Its Name, Use Secular and Religious.

AND the first thing that comes to be spoken of concerning Catechising, is its Name. And I the rather chuse to begin here; because that the true notice of the Name, will help us to that of the thing. Now that there is a peculiar Force and Significancy, in Words, and that we cannot thereof be safely ignorant, is but too evident by those many Errours, that have in all Ages risen from meer Verbal Mistakes. And therefore if we could once be so happy as to find out the true Importance of Words, and to hit upon such an agreement between them and things, as not to cloud in Speech, what is clear in Nature, but plainly to express things as they are in themselves; that then one great cause of Error, in all sorts of Learning, would be removed: For it is an Observation that will not quickly be antiquated, That the confounding those things in Language, which in their Nature are distinct, and the expressing

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of different Matters by the same, or Words of near affinity and likeness, hath in all Sciences been a fruitful Mother of Erroneous Apprehensions.

And this is also plain in the Affairs of Religion; in which not only a perverse mistake in old Words, but a liberty of introducing new, has ever proved fatal, and destructive: For out of *new words*, New Opinions insensibly creep into the Church, and with Age grow too strong for her Discipline: which being foreseen by the Holy *Nicene* Fathers, it moved them to *decree* against the use of such Words in matters of Faith, as were not easily to be deduced from, or directly found in Sacred Scripture.

Socrat. And upon the same account *lib. I. c. 6.* *Tertullian* would not have our Ears accustom'd to *New words*.

Advers. Hæret. Cap. 16. And for the like reason *St. Basil* could not be induced to forego one *Iota* in the old Form, when he was solicited by the *Arians*. A cautiousness which we may conceive, was wisely made use of by those *Reverend Persons*, through whose means, by Gods Blessing, we enjoy our Religion in its present Reformation: For we find that they had an especial care not to innovate in *Words* or *Forms*, when they could
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with due security retain the old. And to instance in what has nearest affinity with our present Subject, we see that they have stiled that Breviary of Religion, which they compiled, or rather collected out of the best and most ancient Models of that kind, by the name of *Catechism*: Which in its general notice signifies a familiar and easie Method of instilling the rudiments of any Art, Science or Faculty. Which being done by a frequent repetition of the same thing, Catechising is derived from a Word importing the reciprocation of the Voice, after the manner of an Echo. And in this Sense it is often to be met with in Secular Authors, from whom it was adopted into Religion, and there retains the same Notion and Office. For by Catechising, the Church hath always taught the Fundaments and chief Principles of Religion *vivâ voce*. And those that were thus taught, the Greek Writers usually call *Catechumens*, and the *Latine* Hearers; which might as well respect the manner of their Instruction, as their Fellowship and Communion with the Church: in which they went no further than to be admitted to hear the Principles of *Christian Faith*, made plain unto them. And to Cate-

chising

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chising, thus understood, there will be no inconvenience to affirm, that *St. Paul* alluded, *Rom. 10. 17.* the Ear being as properly the Door of Religion, as of any other Science. That Catechising was a way of Instruction, not to be restrain'd to those Catechumens so frequently mentioned in Church History, and the Ancient Canons; but that all Believers did therein Communicate, will be made good in another Place of this Discourse.

But if it be doubted whether this be the native meaning of Catechising, it then follows that we have recourse unto the occasion whence it arose. For if Words are notes of that which the Speaker conceiveth, and Conceptions are *Signs* representing that which is spoken of; it is necessary that he who would rightly understand Words, should have recourse unto the things whence they come. Now the Church (which is Gods School) hath ever used Catechising as a Term of Art; and we are therefore to understand it with restraint to such matters as the Church is accustomed thereby to instruct. Following herein the Rule of *Thomas*, that in Words we must not so much respect their original, exact, and precise signification and derivation,

vation, as whereunto by use of Speech they are applied. 2. 2. q. 92. Art. 1. Now seeing that the Church, which is Gods School, hath still by Catechising taught the first notices of Religion, we may safely cloath it with this Definition: *Catechism is a short and easie Instruction, which explains the Mysteries of Faith, and the whole Body of Christian Doctrine, in such a manner as may be plainly understood by the lowest Capacities.* And if there be any thing cloudy in this definition, it will receive sufficient light from what is spoken of in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER II.

The Age of Catechism. The Institution of Adam's and Abraham's Family. The Schools of the Prophets. The continual use of Catechising among the Jews, particularly after the Erection of Synagogues. Their Benefit thereby.

HAVING found that Catechism is but Greek for a peculiar manner of Instruction, and that since it was received into the Church, doth signifie a brief and plain Institution of the first and chief groundsof Religion; we may

by the Laws of concluding, infer that Catechising is as ancient as the Principles which are thereby instructed ; and these are as old as the first Man. For Religion began when God was *Adam's* Catechist, and gave and instructed him in that Law ; in whose observation consisted the main Articles of his continuing in a state of excellent Felicity. In which if he had tarried till he had had an Off-spring grown up to a Capacity of a Religious Education, he would, no doubt, have taught them to observe that Law, which his Maker for that end had assigned him. For we need not be scrupulous to suppose that *Adam* would have been as careful of his Childrens Instruction before the Fall, as he was after it. Some traces of whose care are to be perceived in his Sons Deportment, when they brought their Offerings to Gods Altar as Testimonies of Gratitude and Devotion : Which could not be the effect of meer Natural Instinct, but of *Adam's* Pious Diligence to bring them up Religiously. And though meer Natural Reason may teach Man a Belief and Worship of God, yet to do it with the circumstances of the two first Brethren exceeds, its Power.

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The Understanding and Practice of the *Primordial Law*, of not eating the forbidden Fruit, would have been sufficient for *Adam* and all his Posterity ; as having in its Womb (to use *Tertullian*) all those Moral Precepts which were afterwards delivered by *Moses*, *Exod.* 20. and by our great Law-giver reduced to Two Heads: Love to God ; Love to our Neighbour , *St. Mark* 12. 30, 31. For if they had observed the first, they would not have broken Gods Commandment ; and if they had done the like to the Second, they would not by yielding to the perswasion of the Serpent, have destroyed themselves ; but by love to both, have fulfilled the whole Law. As *Tertullian* argues, *advers. Judæos*, *Cap.* 2. That it was needful for *Adam's* first Issue to be instructed in this *Primordial Law*, wherein the whole Morality consisted, none I think will gainsay : That *Adam* (for there was none else to do it) did therein instruct them, we may conclude, not only from the necessity of the thing, which so Wise a Man as the first could not but perceive ; but also from *Adams* Justice, to make some amends to his Children in their *Education*, for what he had damaged them by his own *Disobedience*. And if the manner of the Instruction

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be demanded, I shall content my self with the Opinion of that *Rabbin*, who ventured (discoursing him upon this Subject) to derive their [*Leback*] or present Catechism from *Adam*, whom they rationally imagine to have taught his Sons a short and plain Description of the necessary Principles of Holiness and Honesty: which are the *Sum* of all Catechism.

But that which yet affords us a more evident attestation of Catechising, or delivering and instructing the Rudiments of Religion, *viva voce*, in the First Ages of the World, is the unquestionable Tradition of those Precepts which pass under the name of *Noah*: Into which if we look attentively, they will easily be discerned to have been the Universal Catechism of all Mankind, and to contain a compleat Scheme of Duties towards God and the Neighbour.

Now among these Precepts some were greater and more Famous, others of an Inferiour and Obscurer rank. Those of the former condition are here spoken of, and usually set down after this manner.

1. Against strange Worship or Idolatry.

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2. Against Blasphemy, or the Cursing of the most Holy Name.
3. Against Effusion of Blood, or Murder.
4. Against Revealing of Nakedness, or Adultery.
5. Against Theft and Rapine.
6. concerning Civil Justice, and Obedience.
7. Against Eating the Limb of a living Creature.

Whereof the two first respect our Demeanour toward God ; the next Four belong to the Carriage of one Man toward another ; and the last forbids all outrageous cruelty to other living Creatures.

But how this last should be reckon'd in the number of those Precepts of Natural Right, common to the whole Human Race, is not so easily to be apprehended ; especially when 'tis consider'd that it was not heard of till after the Flood, when God said unto *Noah*, coming out of the Ark, *Flesh with the Life, thereof, which is the Blood thereof, shall ye not eat*, Gen. 9. 4. Where the eating of Flesh is not simply prohibited, but the abscinding and Eating the Limbs of living Creatures. And a late Author gives an Instance hereof in Lambs stones. The

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The Reasons usually render'd of this Seventh Precept, are the avoidance first of Cruelty ; and next , of Communicating in the Customs of Idolatrous Nations: Which at once protest both against its Age and Morality. And upon this account it is, that learned Persons have excluded it the number of *Natural Precepts*, and set it in *Noah's Ritual of Ceremonies*. But there is a general Agreement among the *Jewish Masters*, that the first Six Precepts were given to *Adam* from the very beginning of things, and were the common Law of all Nations under Heaven.

But no such matter can be found concerning the Seventh: Which is so totally passed over in silence by *Job*: who yet takes notice of all the rest, and justifies his integrity by their observance. And because this perhaps is not obvious to every Reader, it may be no way impertinent, to note the Texts, where the *Idumean* makes his profession.

1. Against Idolatry, *Job* 31. 26.
2. Against Blasphemy, *Job* 1. 5.
3. Against Homicide, *Chap.* 31. 29.
4. Against Adultery, *Chap.* 31. 9.

5. A

5. Against Theft, *Chap. 31. 7.*

6. Against Injustice, *Chap. 29. 7. &c.*

And though these six Precepts, without any remote Collection, may be deduced from the abovesaid Texts; yet in his whole *Book*, *Job* has not left the least intimation of the seventh: which could not have escaped the observation of so wise a Prince, if therein a Natural Equity had been concerned. *St. Augustine*, in his Eighteenth Book and Fourtyseventh Chapter of the *City of God*, affirms that *Job* was neither Native, Israelite, nor a Proselite adopted by their Law; but born and bred in *Idumaea*: And therefore professed not the six Precepts upon the account of a Jewish Tradition, but because they were the common Religion of Mankind.

Before the Law, saith *Tertullian*, was written in Tables of Stone, there was an unwritten Law, which was given neither in *Horeb*, nor *Sinai*, nor in the *Desert*; but in *Paradise*. And was naturally both known and kept by the Fathers; who from the observing of the Equity and Justice of this Natural Law, received Titles of Approbation and Honour; as *Noah* was called a just man, and *Abraham* the friend of God: *Tertul. c. 2. adversus Judeos.*

And

And that this unwritten Law given in Paradise, was the *six Precepts*, we may conclude from what Mr. Seldon tells us out of *Mosche ben Maimon*, who (saith he) peremptorily delivers, that the *six Precepts* were given to the first Man from the very beginning of the World. And therefore ought rather to bear the name of *Adam* than of *Noah*; for the latter can be entitled to them no otherwise, than as in him all Mankind was preserved, as in the former they had been begun. In which sense all Nations and Kindreds of Men, were called the Sons or Children of *Noah*: Among which there was no exterior Badg of distinction, till God gave *Abraham* the Sacrament of *Circumcision*; which did not lessen or abate the extent and power of the *six Precepts*: for after *Circumcision*, the Jews as well as the rest of Men stood obliged to their observance. Nor indeed was it possible to be otherwise, seeing that therein was contained the Universal Religion. And at the coming of *Moses*, these Precepts were so far from being evacuated, that they were confirmed, with the addition of others concerning the Sabbath, the Reverence of Parents, and the very thought of defalking other mens Goods. All which

make

make up the *Ten words* or *Decalogue*. And that was now Engraven in Tables of Stone, which before was only written in Tables of Flesh. But the *six Precepts* were the *Catechism* of the World from *Adam* to *Noah*, who received the *Seventh*. In which condition Religion continued till *Abraham* received the Precept of *Circumcision*, upon which came the great distinction of Nations in respect of Worship. And now the Jews had *eight Precepts* for the Rule of Duties, under which they continued until the time that God at *Mara* gave them a Statute and an Ordinance; and by spaces filled up their Ritual.

But that which most imports the present Subject, is the manner how the *First six Precepts* were instructed: Which without doubt was *vivâ voce*, or by an Oral Institution: for certainly of *things unwritten*, there can be no other means to instil and propagate their knowledge: For notwithstanding that these *Precepts* contain'd such an apparent *Equity and Right*, as could be by none denied, who therein had once been duly informed, yet there was a necessity of competent means to procure this Information. For let Characters be never so large and evident in themselves, yet the

the fairest Paper cannot exhibit them, till thereon they be duly placed. And if the Soul of Man be at first as a *Book* wherein nothing is, and yet every thing may be written; then either *Education* or *Instruction*; *Use* or *Discipline* must of necessity fill up this *blank*. And the *Rasa Tabula* of *mans* Soul, as it is most susceptible, so is it likewise most concerned to be first Engraven with those things which indispensibly respect his Duties toward God and his Neighbour; (the Contents of the *six Precepts*) And that the Soul cannot be otherwise furnished therewith, than by *Oral Institution* or *Catechism*, will be granted by all who would not have this *Table* writ upon just like *those* which *Moses* received in the *Mount*.

But what in this case may seem but darkly probable in the two *Patriarchs* of *Mankind*, is conceived to be clear and evident in the *Father of the Faithful*. For Authors of no contemptible Credit, collect from that Encomium God gave *Abraham*, for his foreseen care to instruct his Children and Household [to keep he way of the Lord, and to do Justice and Judgment] Gen. 18. 19. that this manner of instruction is there spoken of. For albeit that to do Justice and Judgment

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Judgment is a Principle naturally imprinted upon Mans Soul, in a Character no Mortal Power can efface; yet it was Morally impossible for *Abrahams* Family to keep the [*way of the Lord*:] That is, to be acquainted with the Purport and Condition of that Covenant God had made with *Abraham*; where there was no Divine Inspiration, nor any Written Word to guide them; unless *Abraham* by a gentle and easie Method, introduced them into the knowledg of what so intimately concerned them. And not to be scrupulous about *words* or *forms* of Speech, it is more than probable, that this Holy Man taught his Family *viva voce*, or familiarly by word of mouth, which is the true and genuine Sense of that whereof we now speak.

But not to place any strength in this Instance, nor in what is observed to this Purpose, either in the Institution of *Jehoash* by *Jehoiada* the Priest; nor what *Solomon* insinuates concerning himself; nor in what the *Rabbins* assert of the *many houses* of *Catechism* that were in *Hierusalem*; nor in what some write concerning the *Schools of the Prophets*, how that one part of their employment was to Catechize: not placing, I say, any

any strength in these Instances, which might be urged, as they have been, in favour of the Antiquity of *Catechism*; I shall fix upon that which yields both a more obvious and certain Testimony of its Ancientness, namely; That the Jews have continually had, and to this day have the practice of *Catechism*, by which they introduce their Youth into the knowledg of God, and the Rites of his Worship. 'Tis true, there is some difference in the time when this Institution is begun: For the Ancient Jews began not to Teach their Children the Principles of their Religion, till they were compleat Thirteen years of Age; but the Modern Jews in the Eastern Parts especially, begin much more early. And this they do, (as *Aaron Benetás* a *Sabio* in *Barbary* told me) because of their unfettlement, and for fear a sudden removal should prevent them in this Duty.

It is very remarkable, that no Foot-steps of Catechizing appears in the Service of the Temple; which was indeed so wholly Ceremonious, that it may be doubted whether ought of Moral Religion (the chief of *Catechism*) was therein either thought of or designed. Indeed after the Erection of Syna-

gogues

gogues there appear great indications, that this way of instruction was in no vulgar request: But then in fixing the certain time when these Religious Edifices were Erected, there is small agreement among the *Learned*. That Synagogues were built before the Jews return from *Babylon*, is very uncertain. But after they were returned, it is plain that their Land was full of these Houses dedicated to Gods publick Service: wherein all parts of Divine Worship (except Sacrificing) were celebrated. And they may be said to have had that Relation to the Temple, which Parochial Churches have now to the Cathedral. But not to dispute about the Antiquity and Quality of Jewish Synagogues, that which I would observe therein, as most agreeable to the thing in hand, is, That Catechizing was (at least) a Principal part of that Teaching, which was therein frequented. And to attest this remark, one known Passage out of *Epiphanius*, compared with another in *Fl. Josephus*, are all the Authorities that are thought needful to be produced.

Epiphanius speaking of the Scribes (who were the chief Masters of the Synagogues) saith that they were *Διδασκαλ*

τῶ νόμῳ, Reporters of the Law; and that they taught αἱ ἐκείνῳ γραμματικὴν, a kind of *Grammatical* knowledg therein. And *Josephus* writes, that by vertue of this Teaching the Law, the Jews were as ready to answer any Question demanded of them concerning it, as to their own Name. And the reason he renders of this readiness, is very observable, as to the present Theme, which is this, *Because learning the Principles of their Religion as soon as ever they were come to knowledg, they kept them firmly imprinted ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς, in their Souls or Minds.* And how well the Circumstances of this way of instructing the Law, suits with Catechizing in the most obvious Notion, I leave the impartial to judg.

Now that the things thus taught were not barely the meer words of the Law, and their naked Reading (as some have supposed,) may be concluded from the good effect and influence which this instruction had upon the instructed. For we find that it preserved them in the true Worship of the true God; which was a work too high to be accomplished by such low means, as *naming, spelling, joyning Letters and Syllables together, and such other Abcedarian and Grammatical Niceties.*

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Niceties. And that by this instruction the Jews were preserved in the true Worship of the true God, is excellently observed in this particular, namely, That albeit the Hebrew Nation, before their Captivity, had Prophets to instruct them in the true Worship of God, yet they were always falling into Idolatry. But when they were returned out of *Babylon*, though they wanted Prophets, yet they kept close, and faithfully adhered to the Worship of the True God. (Though it must not be denied but that many Corruptions and heretodox Conceits were therein retained.) And the Reason that hereof is rendered, is, the instruction used in the Synagogues: Whereby they were so thoroughly grounded in what they professed, and so firmly and early rooted in the Knowledge and Service of God, that their defection therefrom was even Morally impossible. But when they wanted this plain way of being thus Catechised, they fell into all those Evils, which are the undeniable Consequences of the want of Catechising, even *Diversities of Opinions, Sects, and Divisions.*

St. Paul Arguing with the *Gnostick*, and concluding him excuseless in what he did, useth this Topick: That he had
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not only the Law in readiness to Teach him otherwise, but had already therein been a *Catechumen*: But whether we may hence infer, That the Old Synagogue had a formal *Catechism* like the Modern, I shall not temerarily pronounce. Yet something to this purpose may be collected from those Commentaries which pass under the name of *St. Ambrose*: Where we find the Office of those Doctors mentioned, 1 Cor. 12. 28. thus expounded: *Illos dicit Doctores*, &c. He calls those Doctors or Teachers, who in the Church instructed Children in Reading and retaining their *Lessons*, according to the Custom of the Synagogue; for their Tradition hath passed unto us. If you ask me what the Lessons were, which the Doctors taught the Children; I answer, The Principles of Religion. If you demand the manner how they were Taught; I reply, In a manner suitable to their Capacities. If again you demand what that manner was; I return, Catechizing, in the native and common acception of the Word. But if Catechizing should be ill looked upon, as being a Tradition derived from the Jews; then the greatest part of Christianity may be had under a jealous aspect upon

upon the same account: for it is most certain, that a large share both of *Christian Rites* and *Doctrines* were derived from Judaism, which was not to be laid desolate by Christianity, but compleated and reformed. The Primitive Christianity being (according to Mr. Selden) the lawful and Prophetick Off-spring of the Old Judaism.

CHAP. III.

Catechising in times of the Apostles. Evidences thereof in St. Pauls Epistles. The Contents of their Catechism.

BUT how dim soever the traces of this kind of instruction be in the *Jewish Dispensation*, yet the Foot-steps thereof are more traceable in the Gospel. Where *Catechism* is not obscurely intimated, if we may rely any thing on the Words and Sentences which therein occur to this purpose.

And in the First place, it cannot be denied, but that in the inspired Epistles we plainly read of two sorts of Christians, namely, such as were newly admitted into the Church, compared by St. Peter to *New-born Babies*, 1 Pet. 2. 2.

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and such as had been therein a longer time; called by *St. Paul* the *Perfect*, in respect of their greater Progress in Christian Religion; or the wisdom which descends from above, or which Christ came to Teach and Infuse; *St. Jam. 3. 17*. To the former or these they gave Milk and instructed them in the easier Points of Religion: But strong Meat was ordained for the later. Who having been first well Catechised in Christianity were capable of higher Mysteries. And of this we have a clear illustration in the sixth to the *Hebrews*, where we first read of the *ὁ ἀρχαῖος καὶ ἁλυστος λόγος*, *The Doctrine, or Discourse, of the beginning of Christ*! Or (as we now read it) the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ: This is, a *Catechism* which contained a brief Summary of those Principles which were necessary for every Christian to learn, and to be laid as a Foundation meet for the Superstructure of higher Mysteries, and matters of a deeper reach; such as the Priest-hood of *Melchizedeck*, and how he was a Type of Christ, *Heb. 7*. And of these last *St. Paul* would not intreat, till he found the former so faithfully received, believed and practised, as that they might be laid aside for the present.

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Now the *ἀρχαί*, or Principles wherein Christians were first instructed, are thus reckon'd by the Apostle: First, Repentance from dead works: Secondly, Faith towards God: Thirdly, The Doctrine of Baptism: Fourthly, Imposition of hands, or Confirmation: Fifthly, The Article of the Resurrection from the dead: And Lastly, The certainty of *Eternal Judgment*. These were the chief and main Points of the Apostles *Catechism*, the first Principles of the Oracles of God, the Rudiments of Christian Religion, saith our Old Marginal Note, or the *Catechism* wherein the younger sort of those times were instructed. And these Articles now mentioned, or some such like, were (no doubt) that Form of Doctrine, that manner of Catechizing which was delivered to the *Romans*, *Rom. 6. 17.* or as our Margin reads out of the Greek, whereunto ye were delivered or given up: Where the ordinary Phrase is changed by the Apostle. For albeit to say, To this form of Doctrine you were delivered, is not so agreeable either to the *Latin* or *English* speech, as, This form of Doctrine which was delivered unto you: Yet the Apostle makes u'e of the first, to tell us, saith *Cajetan*, That not so

much the form of Religion was delivered to Men, as that Men were delivered to the form of Religion. That so by this means Religion might be known to have Authority and Power over Man, and not Man over Religion. But not to insist upon this ; it need not be doubted that *this form of Doctrine* spoken of by St. Paul, was a Summary of Christianity, or the *Catechism* used in those early and best times of Christianity, which contained the first Principles of the Oracles of God. By which some understand the Creed, as Cyril of Hierusalem in his *Catech.* 4. styled by him the *milky Introduction*, in allusion to St. Paul, 1 Cor. 3. 2. Heb. 5. 12. Others, of the Creed and Lords Prayer, as Bede : Others, the Creed and Decalogue, as Aquinas : Others, all those Elements which the *Catechumens* learned, and professed at Baptism ; whereof the Creed was the Principal. Which with the Lords Prayer the Clergy was enjoined to Teach the People, *Concil. Mogunt. cap. 45.* And it was a general command of the Church, that those who were to be Baptized, should have a certain time allotted for the learning and rehearsing of the Creed. Which the Eastern Christians always repeated with a clear Voice, when they came to the

the Holy Communion of Christs Body and Blood : As appears in the Twenty second Canon of the Council of Toledo. But if this seem to restrain Catechizing only to such *Catechumens* as in the History and Canons of the Church are frequently mentioned ; and that this kind of instruction was not used toward those whom by Baptism the Church had already received into her Communion : It then follows, that we shew how *Catechism* was a plain Institution wherein all Believers did Communicate. And in the first place it is manifest out of *Oecumenius* (expounding the *σολημία ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου* *ὄντος*) That there were some Points of Christian Religion wherein the Novices were Catechised before Baptism, and some after. Those in which they were Catechised before Baptism, were, *The necessity of Repentance : to renounce the Devil and all his works : To believe in God, &c.* And those Points which they learned after Baptism, were the *Mysteries* of our Saviours passion and Priest-hood, his taking our sins on himself, and working our Salvation ; the *Mysteries* of our Resurrection, of the last Judgment, and everlasting reward, or life. And the *Catechism* of these was common to all Believers, because necessary.

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Secondly, That Catechising belong'd to all within the Church, and was not confined only to the Novices in Religion, and Candidates of Christianity, we may confidently infer from the exprefs words of *St. Paul. Gal. 6. 6.* where he divides the whole Church, to which that *Letter* was directed, into *Catechist and Catechised*. Whereby the later cannot be meant only those who were not yet admitted to Holy Baptism, Styled by the Church *Canons Catechumens*: For then we must conclude that the *Catechumen* and Believer were all one: contrary to *Tertullian de Pœnit. Cap. 6. de Coronâ Milit. Cap. 2.* and all the Fathers: And that there was a Christian Church in *Galatia*, consisting of *Catechumens* or Unbaptised Persons, *i. e.* a Church of Christians without Christians. Which absurd inconveniences cannot be evaded, unless by those Catechised spoken of by the Apostle, we understand such as had received Baptism already, and were still to be instructed in that Religion whereinto by that Divine Rite they had been admitted. So that in *St. Paul's* time Catechising in its Native acception was continued even to those who had attained already to so much knowledg in the Principles of Christianity, as render'd them

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them, in the Language of the Ancients, *Competentes*, or Persons fit for Baptism, and to be admitted to the higher Mysteries of Religion. The same Apostle told the *Corinthians*, that he had fed them with Milk, that is, by the consent of all, with *Catechetical Doctrines*. And there is no doubt that those Texts in *Act. 18. 25.* *Heb. 5. 12.* *Heb. 6. 1.* are pregnant intimations of this truth. The like may be affirmed of what *St. Luke* has recorded *S. Luke 1. 4.* concerning the Introduction of the *Eloquent Apollos*, and his most *Excellent Theophilus*, into the knowledge of Christ. And what has been said, affords sufficient ground of asserting *Catechism* to have been in use with the Apostles, and that it descended from the *Synagogue*. How it was the Practice also of the Primitive Church, is the Subject of the ensuing Chapter.

CHAP. IV.

*The Apostles Catechists in several Provinces.
The Declension and Restauration of Catechising. Catechists Styled Exorcists, &c.*

BUT if we imagine that the marks of Catechising are less apparent in the New Testament, yet if we look into *Ecclesiastical History*, we shall there find that the Apostles had their several Provinces wherein they were Catechists. And that by means of constant Catechising, many Kingdoms within Forty years after *the Passion* received an alteration in their Pagan Ceremonies. Although it must be confessed that it was not long till the Malice and Envy of the Devil and Man brought a decay in this most useful Institution. For in the second Age, we read that Catechising was so far declined, that *Origen* (living in the Two hundred and thirtieth of Christ) was honoured with the Title of its Restorer. But where this Restauration of Catechising by *Origen* was affected, is not so evident. There is a great probability that *Judea* was the Scene of so good an Action. For we read that

that he was very kindly received there, after he fled out of *Alexandria*, upon his falling into disgrace with the Christians of that Country, because in the time of *Decius* he had offer'd Incense to an *Idol*, to save his Body (of which his care was not always justifiable) from being defiled by a filthy *Ethiopian*.

In *Alexandria*, *Origen* could not be said to restore Catechising, for it is expressly affirmed, that there he succeeded in *Cathedrâ Catechetica* his Master *Clemens*, as *Clemens* had done his Master *Pantenus* in the same Chair. And of these two later, we are told, that they made it their Employment to Teach the Grounds of Religion, not by Sermons or Homilies, but by *Catechism*, in such Schoolls and Colledges, as in great likelihood they themselves had founded for that purpose.

So that we see how in *Alexandria* (and we may hope that the like was in other Parts) there was a succession of *Catechists*; who were also called *Exorcists*, not only because (as *Isidore* explains the word) by Prayer in the Name of Jesus they cast *unclean Spirits* out of those who were possessed: Nor meerly in regard of Exorcising the Pagan *Catechumens*, when they came to be Baptized (as

is to be seen at large in *Burchardus Unormatenfis*) but because that by their diligent Catechising the Principles of Christianity, they pulled down Idolatry, and thereby cast Satan out of his Kingdom, and dispossessed him of that Tenor which by Idol-worship he had so long usurped. And the first part of the Vow of Baptism, binds the Baptized to renounce Idolatry under the name of Devil. That Exorcising was an Office of good repute in the Ancient Church, and not to be invaded by the *Laity*, is clear out of *Tertullian*, who in his Book *advers. Hæret. Cap. 41.* tells, how the very Heretical Women were become so shameless and malepart, that they durst Teach, Dispute, Exorcise, and even Baptise.

Mr. *Calvin* makes it a probable conjecture, that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was not Penn'd till some time after the Gospel was, and the Church had erected a form of Government, and had Constituted among other things, an Order of Instruction, or *Catechism*, in which both the Adult Converts, and Children of Believers were to be Taught : And he further adds, that those Principles mentioned *Heb. 6.* had respect unto the usual and established form of *Catechism*. Now if this conjecture be argumentative, and referred

ferred to its proper place, there will need no more to prove Catechising to be of Apostolical Institution and Practice.

CHAP. V.

The Antiquity of Catechism probable upon the account of its convenience: In respect of the Object; Method of Instruction.

BUT suppose that all which has hitherto been observed be not evident, nay, that nothing of this way of Teaching was ever in use with the Primitive Instructors of Christianity, which would be a very uncouth supposal; yet this doth only conclude against the Age, but not the convenience of *Catechism*. It no way proves that such a way of instruction had not been highly rational, to introduce ignorant Infidels into the knowledge of the true Faith. For all those who by ordinary means were to be converted to Christian Religion, were no less ignorant of its Principles, than those Infants who are born within the Church; and therefore to be Catechised therein, was as proper and requisite for them, as for these: For the ignorance of the one,

36 The Primitive Institution.

as well as of the other, was to be removed by such means as all discreet *Teachers* have thought suitable to that end.

Now it is obvious to every Capacity, that no Mans ignorance can be removed by *Rhetorizing Harangues, Pompous Discourses, profound Researches, &c.* But by humble and plain Lessons: Easie and obvious Rules: And such *A. b. c.* Rudiments, as fall under the comprehension of the rude and unlearned; and which are proper to prepare them for higher Lessons. In brief, though the things which are taught be in themselves sublime and difficult, yet the manner of Teaching them must be humble and easie. And this way of instruction was (no doubt) pursued by the Primitive Doctors, who did not only prepare by Catechising the ruder Infidel to receive Baptism, but did also by the same course build up and educate those into a more perfect knowledge of Christianity, whom they had already Baptised. And therefore *κατηχεῖν* and *οἰκοδομεῖν*, to Catechise and Edifie, are with Grammarians terms expressive of each other.

And this makes Catechising highly convenient in respect of the true Method of learning: For therein is observed the natural path of instruction, which ever
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begins with short and obvious notions, to the end the Learner may not be discouraged with a difficult and perplexed entrance. For if the minds of Novices, or young Disciples, should be loaden and puzzled with multitude and variety, or with obscureness and prolixity of Rules, they would be in danger to reject the whole Institution, for the irksome painfulness of its first Grounds. And albeit that all beginnings are attended with Hardships: Yet they ought in all reason to be reduced to as great an easiness as their Nature will afford; to the end that they may not dishearten the Undertaker. This we see is the course of all Arts and Sciences, both Liberal and Mechannick, which have their Introductive and Initiatory Systems, containing such easie Elements as being first known, fit the *Learner* for deeper Documents. And these lower Rudiments hold some resemblance with that lesser size of Vertues, which some *Platonists* call Purgative, because they are first taken into the Soul to cleanse and prepare her for the reception of *Greater*. And in Religion it is as requisite as in human Arts, that the first Lessons be framed according to the weak and slender Capacities of youngest *Beginners*.

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Now as there is small probability that in Writing he should ever be able to give the true proportion of Words, who never learned the first draught of Letters: So there is no great assurance, that any one should make any solid and firm Progress in the Mysteries of Christianity, who was never acquainted with the Principles thereof: or, That those should be able to give any good account of the hope that is in them, who never learned the Articles of Faith; on which their hope is founded.

And this is a Clue that leads us to the right way of grounding Religion: for by what is said, it is easie to perceive, that solid Catechising is to the orderly Structure of *Spiritual Knowledge*, what a sure Foundation is to any material Fabrick. And therefore he that would edifie himself, or others, in Christianity, without this Ground-work, build but a Visionary Church, or a House upon the Sand. As hath been sadly visible in those Persons who being not founded upon this Rock, have been quickly shaken and blown down with every Wind of *Corrupt Doctrine*, vented by Men crafty to contrive deceit. It being impossible that those should be steadfast in such Principles of Religion, where-

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C H A P. VI.

Catechism necessary in respect of the increase and advancement of Spiritual Knowledge : To have a distinct Understanding of things necessary to Salvation, &c.

AN D not only the sure grounding, but also the regular and solid advance and increase in the Knowledge of *Things Divine*, makes Catechising a necessary Introductive. For unless by this means we be firmly principled in Christianity, our knowledge therein will be both small and unstable : and as a pernicious consequent thereof, we shall become trifling and affected in that little we know. For it fares in Divinity as Philosophy, wherein a little smattering Knowledge makes Men vain and assuming, whom a deeper insight therein would render composed and settled. And this has been, and is still, miserably apparent in the Ancient and Modern Sectaries, whom a meer conceit of knowledge hath tempted to assume and usurp.

usurp the Place and Function of Teachers, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm, 1 *Tim.* 1. 7. And indeed their ignorance is the Mother of such assuming Knowledge, as is seen in our great Pretenders to *Spiritual Science*, who but too exactly prove themselves descended of those Old *Gnosticks*, who were so pestilential to the Primitive Church; being notoriously addicted to Blaspheme, rail at, and speak evil of the things they know not; and in a peculiar manner are gifted with Maliciousness, Avarice, Schismaticalness, Rebellion, and Contumacy: According to their description in St. *Jude* 10. 11. 12, &c. And the want of having been duly acquainted with the true grounds of Religion, is one main reason why they are in that *Divine Science* such Smatterers and half-witted; whereof there is small hopes ever to have them cured, but by a full Institution in those Elements which are undeniably requisite to sound Knowledge.

But Gatechising is not only necessary upon the account of a regular entrance and encrease of Knowledge in Religion, but also to give us a clear intuition of those particular Truths whereof we cannot be ignorant, but with the
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peril of our eternal Happiness. For notwithstanding that all things necessary to Salvation are clear and plain in Scripture, yet the Scripture it self is so spacious a Field, that even a wary Traveller may therein lose himself. And besides this, the things necessary to be known by us in order to our future Welfare, are in *Sacred Writ* so often mingled with things that are otherwise, that it exceeds the generality of Capacities to find them out, and rightly to sever. Those that are idle (as the most are in this Study) will not take pains; and those that are ignorant have not the ability to distinguish, collect, and reduce such *necessary Points* to their respective Chapters. And yet till such Points be plainly digested into *several Heads*, many, at least the illiterate Multitude, will unavoidably want a competent Knowledge of what is necessary both to their Temporal and Immortal Happiness. Now that the gathering of these necessary Truths into *Sums* and *Models*, is the proper Work of *Catechism*, is visible in all those *Systems* which have ever born that Name. And of this Truth, our own *Church-Catechism* yields a sufficient Testimony: In which all things that concern *Faith, Practice, Prayer, and Doctrine*; are collected

lected into such short and plain *Sums*, that the weakness of no Mans Wit can either hinder altogether the Knowledge, or excuse the utter ignorance of things necessary to Salvation. For whosoever, with a mind free from Prejudice, shall impartially peruse the *Church Catechism*, he therein may observe all saving Truths, reduced to such short, but full Heads, that the weak are not left to the hazardous, nor the slothful to the laborious research thereof in Holy Scriptures.

C H A P. VII.

Catechising the most suitable means to heal the Distempers of this Church. Several Propositions to be supposed. A short digression concerning our Disorders.

BUT we will yet suppose that all which hitherto has been delivered, ought to receive no better estimation than meer ordinary Discourse; and that we are to proceed upon a new Ground, and examine the necessity of Catechising in respect of the present Temper and Disposition, or indeed rather Distempers and Disorders of this Church and People. And in order unto this, it will

will not be altogether impertinent and useless, a little to consider what our present Disorders are.

And in the First Place we cannot but observe, that our Declension both from the Design and Rule of the Gospel, is not conspicuous only in those grand Debauchees, who grow weary of the Name of Christ, or profess it only to disgrace it: But also in those who seem strict and severe in performing all the Formal and Exterieur part of Discipleship. Even those I mean, who are zealous Hearers of Christs Word, and constant Communicants at his Table, not professing Devotion to any other. For even these are content (as occasion serves) to abandon that Purity, Continence, Meekness, Humility, Candor, Mercifulness, and other instances of a sweet Nature, so vehemently urged by our Divine Law-giver, and which are the genuine result of true Christian Principles, for that one Law of sordid Interest, brutal Passion, and churlish Self-preservation, although they cannot but acknowledge, that all these are totally opposite to the true Spirit of *Christianity*. And besides professed Politicians, there are others who seem to look upon Religion as a meer Engine of *State*, and a thing that is as tractable

tractable for Battery as Defence. And who, notwithstanding their contrary Pretences, live as if they regarded not what Christ chiefly aimed at by his Incarnation, Death and Resurrection. And how that he gave himself for us (both in his Birth and Death) to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purifie unto himself a peculiar People zealous of Good Works. And that he rose from the dead to bless us, in turning every one of us from our Iniquities. And that the main design of our inspired Christianity, is the entire Reformation of our Lives, and to make us as good as our Profession.

But besides this sort of Nominal Christians there is another, which are so far transported with the opinion of that Union which they fancy already to enjoy with Christ, that they dream to be in present Possession of that Vision which is peculiar to the future State. And they are so dazled with the supposititious Glory of their Spiritual Perfection, that they condemn the means ordained to make them truly perfect, because they fancy they have arrived at it already.

And with these may be joyned all such who are so closely addicted to their own Opinions, that they think it a mat-

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ter of Conscience, Piety and Religion to oppose and condemn whosoever are not of their Mind and Perswasion. Since whose rise we have been under a sensible decay of Charity, and (as a natural consequent thereof) an encrease of wickedness.

But if these ingross not all the occasions of our Disorders, there is another sort of People who will fill up their measure: Those I mean who pervert the plainest Scriptures to such a meaning, as doth best help to carry on their Designs: And what is yet worse, who make it matter of Conscience to assert that Sense of the Text which they have perversely mistaken. And this deifying our own Interpretations, and tyrannically enforcing them upon others: This restraining of the Word of God from that Latitude and Generality, and the Understandings of Men from that liberty wherein Christ and his Apostles left them, is, and hath been the only Fountain of all the Schisms of the Church, and that which makes them Immortal: The common Incendaries of Christendom, and that which tears into pieces, not the Coat, but the Bowels and Members of Christ: *Ridente Turcâ, nec dolente Judæo*, Take away these Walls of Separation, and all will quickly

quickly be one. Take away the damning of Men for not subscribing to the Words of Men, as the Words of God, require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no Man *Master* but him only. Let those leave claiming Infalibility, who have no Title to it; and let them that in their *Words* disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their *Actions*. In a word, take away tyranny in Opinions, by which the Devil withstands the Power of *Truth*, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their Understandings to Scripture only, and as Rivers, whose Passage is not interrupted, run all to the Ocean; so it may well be hoped by Gods Blessing, that *Universal Liberty* thus moderated, may quickly reduce us to Truth and Unity. These thoughts of Peace may come from the God of Peace, to whose Blessing I recommend them. And that this may not be looked upon for some singularity in my own Perswasion, I have transcribed the Words out of Mr. *Chillingworth*, and he out of another, and enclosed them in a Parenthesis.

But taking no delight to travel further in search of those Distempers which I am unable to remedy; the only comfort

Fort is, that they cannot be looked upon as the Issues of our Religion, nor any way be charg'd upon the Principles we profess. And therefore we must seek elsewhere to lay the Imputation : and I shall go no further than to what I mentioned in the Introduction, even, the Omission, or Luke warm use of Catechising.

And here in the First place, it cannot be denyed, how that the generality of the People of this Kingdom, have for many Years (at least during the time of our Intestine Wars) either been destitute of all Catechising, or have been Catechised only in such Principles, as were good for nothing but to establish the Elder in a cursed Schism and Rebellion, and to infect the Younger with the same Contagion. The sad effects whereof are still visible in the unpeaceable Tenets of some, and in the want of a due understanding of Religion in most. In respect of which, we have need to be taught again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God ; being become such as have need of Milk, and not of strong Meat. The greatest part of the common People, being so far unable to reap any benefit from the handling of abstruser Mysteries in Eloquent and

and Elaborate Discourses, (which is so studiously pursued by our *Junior* and *Florid Theologues*) that they want instruction in the plainest parts of *Catechetical Doctrines*. For notwithstanding that we boast much of our Knowledge of Christ, and that our Proficiency is so great in Religion, that we conceive our selves wiser than our Teachers; yet if the Tree may be judged by its Fruits, we shall be found shamefully ignorant of what we assume to know, and to have little of that Wisdom which descends from above, which Christ came to teach and infuse, and which is Pure, Peaceable, Gentle, easie to be entreated, merciful, without Hypocrisie and Wavering.

In the Second place, we cannot but with deep Resentments observe, that since the time God turned again our Captivity, and restored this Church to the free use of his Ordinances, Catechising has met but with cold Entertainment, even from those by whom it ought to have been most lovingly cared for. For in most places it has been looked upon rather as a Foreigner, than a Native of the Church; and as Fruits of their Mouth, never in Season but for a few Days in *Lent*: And even then too, the

the *Church-Catechism* is generally taught, without any such explanation as is needful, in respect of those slender Capacities to whose instruction it is chiefly devoted.

And if, in the Third place, we consider who those are, which on the one hand hinder the progress and settlement of Unity, Peace, and Concord in this Church, by an undutiful froward resisting of *her Laws*: Or, who they are that on the other hand Apostatize and utterly forsake her Communion; it will be found upon due examination, that we have laid the ground of the Disobedience of the one, and of the defection of the other, in a want of a timely and diligent Catechising.

And as for the First sort, namely, the disobedient and refractory (who are now known by the very candid Name of *Dissenters*) they cannot pretend to a more plausible excuse of their Undutifulness, than that they were never duly Catechised to the contrary. For granting them to be Persons not totally forsaken of all Ingenuity and right Reason, we cannot imagine that they should so foully violate their bounden Duties both to *God* and *Man*, had they ever been fully taught, or did clearly

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retain any thing but an imperfect and prejudicate knowledge of *those Duties*, as they are plainly set down in the *Church-Catechism*.

And as for the Latter sort, to wit, those who have Apostatized and fallen from ours to the Roman Perswasion, they have been so far from having their first Tinctures and Foundation in Religion according to our publick *Catechism*, that they might say thereof as those in *Acts 19. 2.* did of the Holy Ghost. But we must limit this Observation chiefly to those who had the unhappiness to be born in this Church when she was under the Cross, and wore the Marks of her great Master. And as for those who had been instructed in our *Church-Catechism*; yet before they left us, they had so far unlearned it, as that they had retain'd of that System of our Religion, such loose, rambling, and incoherent Notions, as if it were wholly Enthusiastick, or had been compiled by Persons deeply *Hypochondriacal*. And for closure of this Paragraph, I shall only add, That none could ever be met with, who for Ends truly Spiritual and Religious, did ever abandon this for the *Roman Church*, who had been thoroughly grounded in her *Catechism*.

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And there will want no Reasons to support this Assertion, if it be duly considered, how the very Frame and Texture of the *Catechism* doth obviate and oppose all the main Errors of Popery, as they relate either to Faith or Practice; to Prayer or Doctrine.

And First, he that has been duly Catechised in the Apostles Creed, will not only be armed against a spurious Explication of the Old Articles of our Faith, but also against a needless addition of New ones. For he will find, that the first *Twelve* contain such a perfect Summary of all saving Truths simply necessary to be believed, that those Articles added thereunto by the Council of *Trent*, ought to be rejected upon the account of being *Superfluous*. And at the same time he will find ground enough to explode that *Implicite Faith*, so much relied upon in the *Romish Church*, who considers the necessity of a personal Belief, as it is clearly required in the first Word of the Creed, which in *Latine* gives name to the whole.

And in the next place, as to those Errors of Popery that concern our Practice, they will be certainly discovered and refuted by a right understanding of the *Decalogue*, which by all is grant-

ed to be a clear and perspicuous Rule of what we are to do both toward God and our Neighbour.

And a Man that is well grounded in the Doctrine of the First Commandment, knows, that he must reserve all Divine Honour, Trust, Devotion to God alone, and that he may bestow no part thereof upon the Creature; and therefore cannot but avoid and abhor those *Romish Doctors* that would make him a Client to the Saints, and a constant Votary to the Blessed Virgin and his Guardian Spirit. He that is well grounded in the Doctrine of the Second Commandment, will never be induced to believe, that the Image is to be adored with the same Worship that is due to what is worshipped: He will be wary of admitting any bodily representations of the Holy Trinity: and look jealously upon all the Doctrine of Image worship, which he sees to be vindicated with a few remote and suspicious Distinctions, devised by the Fathers of that Doctrine on purpose to maintain its Credit. He that is thoroughly instructed in the Doctrine of the Third Commandment, and hath thence been taught to tremble at, and reverence the Holy Name of the Almighty, will never be induced to believe, that

that frequent Cursing and Swearing, if customary, is Venial, or a Sin which is pardonable in its own Nature, and for which the Favour of God cannot be forfeited : That equivocating in Oaths is lawful : That our most Solemn Oaths may be dispensed with : That the dreadful Name of God may be used in the unwarrantable exorcization of the Creatures : That Understanding and Devotion are not necessarily required to our Invocations upon God. He that has been thoroughly informed of the mind of its eternal Author in the Fourth Commandment, will never give up himself to a Religion that prefers a Mans Day before Gods, or a Saints Day before the Lords : Which would alter the Institution of God himself, as was designed by Pope *Silvester*, who decreed that Thursday should be kept for the Lords Day. He that hath well learned the Fifth Commandment, must do great Violence to his Understanding, before he can chuse to be of a Religion that loves to drink the Blood of princes : That absolves Subjects from their Allegiance to their Lawful Sovereign : That gives Power to a Vicar to depose Princes at Pleasure : That Arms Subjects with Power to murder their King. The like may be

said of all the Precepts of the Royal Law of God, which is the most perfect Rule of our Obedience, and which we are Taught to violate, so soon as we have given up our selves to Popery, and to the Service of the *Roman Moloch*. And though these are Mysteries which the *Romish Seducers* carefully conceal, and sometime zealously inveigh against, while they are compassing *ease Profelytes*, with whom they deal in the most specious Pretences; yet they have no sooner deluded them to give up their Names to Popery, and thereupon to shake Hands with all liberty of judging for themselves, than by degrees they let them know what is to be done. And if they startle at doing what is commanded them, this is presently censured for a Relick of their *Old Heresie*, and that there was something wanting in their Conversion, which cannot be supplied, but by acting thoroughly all the most horrible Injunctions of their New Faith.

And by the same means of being well Catechised in the Lords Prayer, a Man will be able to apprehend and reject the many Errors Popery would impose upon him in that high concern. For thereby he will clearly perceive that Prayer ought to be made to God only, and that none
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can share with him in that, or any other part of Divine and Religious Worship. And that for this reason he ought not to embrace a Religion which enjoyns him to pray unto Saints and Angels, and that too not only to have them intercede to God for him, but also to help him in his Necessities, and to deliver him both in Bodily and Ghostly Dangers. And that this may not be thought the fault of Rosaries, Hours, and Books of private Devotions (for which the Church of *Rome* is accountable, as having confirmed them by her Authority) it is also the Tenor of her *publick Service*: as is plainly to be seen in the Collects, Hymns, and Litanies of that Breviary which was restored by the Council of *Trent*, and authorised by several Popes, and which is at this day in uncontrollable use through all the Papal Dominions.

And we might also observe the like concerning the Doctrine of the Sacraments in which whosoever is once fully instructed according to the *Catechism* of this Church, will quickly discern the Abuses thereinto introduced by Popery. To mention no more than what belongs to the Author of a Sacrament; which our *Catechism* asserts, and which is an

undeniable Truth, to be only Christ. And therefore all those things are to be excluded the number of Sacraments, that are not of his immediate and clear appointment. And that *Orders, Penance, Confirmation, Marriage, Extream Unction* (all Romish Sacraments) are not of Christ's Institution, is easily discernable to Men but slenderly versed in the Holy Bible; and therefore not to be received for the Sacraments of Christ, but Inventions of those, who teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. Now by these imperfect intimations we may safely infer, That those who have had their Foundation in Religion surely laid according to the publicly allowed *Catechism* of this Church, must have other Ends to serve than those of Religion, and drive other projects than Gods Honour, and their own Salvation, who forsake her Communion for that of *Rome*.

But to return: What ever hath unhappily contributed to our Revolting to the one hand or the other from the Established Religion of this Church, there is none that will deny but that the lack of a plain and solid Catechising has had therein a very large share. And therefore we may conclude, That the careful

ful practice of that, will be a chief means to restore Union and Peace, the Omiffion whereof hath occasioned the contrary : And indeed, Catechifing feems the only proper way not only to ftrengthen thofe that do ftand, but to raife up thofe that are faln ; if we confider how ineffectual all other ways have proved, which have been managed to this end. Which now come to be furveyed.

C H A P. VIII.

The Methods ufed for our reclaiming, furveyed, proving ineffectual, &c.

AND here we need not be told, how Indulgence and Clemency, Acts of Amnefty and Grace, have been fo far unable fo much as to work us up to a good Humour, that like fresh Pastures to unruly Beasts, they have only ferved to ftrengthen us for a fturdier refiftance. Nor need we be told of making Converts with the Churches Patrimony : for though by this means fome may be invited to bear the Ark of God, yet they do it but like the Philiftins Kine, who were ftill lowing after the Calves they

had left behind them. It needs not be demonstrated, that our frowardness and opiniastrè are not to be cured by such Methods : But that which I would chiefly take notice of, is, that *Disputation* and *Preaching*, which out of an agreeableness that they are generally thought to bear to our distempers, and the powerfulness of their management, have obtained a *Name* to be the only proper remedies. But the continuance of the Malady, is a convincing Argument that these are not so proper for this purpose, as is so generally supposed. And give me leave to speak of these two freely ; and first of *Disputation*, which is a meer empyrick prescription in order to heal our present distempers. For though *Disputation*, as it is managed by the Pen, may have got a great Vogue in the World, yet we can never hope that our *Dissenting Judgments* should hereby be reconciled, if with due seriousness we consider ; First, the manner of their conduct : Secondly, the matter to be disputed : Thirdly, the persons thereby to be wrought upon.

And First, If the conduct of disputes fall under a calm, unprejudiced and reflexive review, (as they appear in Print) the Pen-men thereof seem to have intended rather

rather the defamation, than conviction of each other ; and to have been of an opinion that men were to be refuted, as *Mercury* of old was worshipt, by throwing dirt and stones in their Face. But we have been taught by miserable experience that the lashing of a *Few*, hath been subservient to no better end than to exasperate the *whole Party* : And that our keenest Arguments, if we may judge by the Event, have only served to alarm the Adversary into a better provision for future resistance, and to strengthen their opinion in that part wherein the *Attack* had discovered it to be the weakest. But grant (as indeed we must) that the Dissenters (to whom this Paragraph chiefly relates) are not able to stand in Argument before their Opponents ; yet we must also grant, that there is a want of *Decorum* in the Victors carriage, while his Argument loseth its efficacie, through the looseness, luxury, or rigour of its expression. For it is too apparent to conceal, that there are so many unmanly reflections in most of our late Controversies, that discreet and sober persons loath the reading of those Pages where they occur. Which gives occasion for doubting that such arguings so managed, proceed not from that *Spirit*

of

60 The Primitive Institution.

meekness wherewith the overtaken Brother should be restored; nor were designed to procure Unity and Concord among us, seeing that so little of that *Charity* can therein be discerned, which is the bond of Peace, and sure ground-work of all true Reconcilement. And if the conduct of our *Debates* were thoroughly considered, we might find this Church complaining like the Eagle in the Greek Epilogue, which seeing her Breast wounded with a feather'd Dart, cryed out with Tears, Alas! my own kind hath destroyed me. But to proceed.

It cannot be doubted, but that some opinions sooner die by being contemn'd, than taken notice of. And I am perswaded, that this *National Church* is now troubled with many Opinions which long ere this would have found their own Graves, if they had not been kept alive with opposition. In so much that it may be said of this particular Church, what was of the Catholick, That if she had stopt and damn'd up the Originals and Springs of Controversies, rather than determining for one part, to give them as it were a Pipe and Conduit to convey them to Posterity, she had not suffer'd that Inundation of Opinions with which at this day she is over-run. A policy still

still in practice in the Popish Countries, where those Books of Controversies are scarce to be met with, wherein their Religion is maintained against Reformed Churches. By which means they live free from those Dissentions wherewith their Neighbours are afflicted, to their scandal and ruin: And I hope we may safely imitate their *Wisdom*, whose *Errors* we abhor.

But if Controversies were as necessary, as by some they are pretended to be, yet their conduct ought so far to be reformed, as that at least there be a cessation from hostile Expressions, which have hitherto been of no better use than to exasperate Men into a petulant and peevish vindication of that *Name*, under which they conceived themselves to be reviled. Next, that the Disputers would not vent and foam out their personal Piques and Animosities under the pretence and cloke of asserting *Religion* and the *Church*. Lastly, that they would aim at Peace and not Revenge. For how seemly soever the present carriage of Disputes may be accounted in persons of another Character, yet it is very ill-becoming those who are stiled *Embassadors of Reconciliation*, and who ought to express the Emphasis of that Title, in
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reconciling Mens Wills with their Duties, and their Understandings with the Truth; in bringing the wicked to repentance, and the malicious to Charity; and to win all to a holy compliance with the design and Rule of the Blessed Author of Christianity; which was, to heighten our Conversation to the most elevated pitch of true Vertue, Peace, and Holiness; and that our Righteousness should exceed all theirs that ever went before us.

C H A P. IX.

The Just Matter and Subject of Controversie in Religion examined. How by Catechising, and not Dispute, we are therein to be reconciled.

AND not only the present conduct of Disputes render them unsuitable Medicines for our Disease; but also the things concerning Religion, which can with any Reason be pretended to be the matter thereof. Now whatever in Religion can be pretended to be disputable, must either respect its Dress and Ornaments, or its Body and essential Parts; the Exterieur Appendages, or the Principles of Religion. If the Scruple, or the Dispute be about

about the Dress, outward Rites, Circumstances, and Fashion of Religion: than no contrivance seems more rational, or method more probable to assail and remove it, than a due Catechising and instructing the scrupulous in the indispensable Duties of the Fifth Commandment, and to tender him a plain Scheme of the Obligation that lies upon his Conscience; *To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him: to submit himself to all his Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters.*

How the Supreme Powers have Authority in the Externalsof Religion.

How in Religion things indifferent in themselves may pass into a Law, which ought to be obeyed, as much as any Laws in indifferent things which relate to the good of the Civil State.

How things of never so low a stature, or indifferent concernment, having once received the Image and Superscription of a Law, ought to be obey'd, both for the sake of God and Conscience.

How it can no way comply with the design of Government, to make good their Institutions by dint of Argument: For if Authority were obliged to satisfy every meddling and capricious *Brain*, they would have little or no time left to

to be obeyed, &c. And when indiscretion of zeal, or pride of Wit, engage to vindicate every thing that is lawfully commanded, it is to have a better opinion of our own, than the Magistrates Prudence; to think our Arguments will be more prevailing than their Commands; or that the former were requisite to support the latter, &c.

That these and the like things are proper for Catechism, and thereby the most gently and indiscernably to be infused, none I presume will gainsay. For they naturally fall in with those Truths which belong to our duty toward man, of which we must be duly informed, ere we can therein be exact.

If the Dissenter yield an obedient ear to this Instruction, there will be little fear of his continuing scrupulous to obey what his Superiors have a just power and right to enjoyn: If he do not hearken, then let him be devoted to the Civil Power, and leave the Magistrates to vindicate their own Authority; and to make that be done for *Wrath*, which would not for *Conscience*. And I am tempted to think, that if at the *Happy Restauration* this way had been pursued, we long ere this had been sensible of its good Effects. And I will add this more over,

over, That if the Orthodox Clergy, ever since God wonderfully restored them, had devoted the greatest share of their pains to plain Expositions and Paraphrases of the Church Catechism, they might long before this have gently gained both upon their Opinions and Affections, who (by the indiscretion of other Methods) seem to be now alienated beyond retrieve. Conscience of Obedience will answer all the Scruples of Minds disposed to Peace; and for the Turbulent let them be answer'd with Rods and Axes.

The next thing that can be disputed in Religion, besides its dress and exterior adherencies, are its *Body*, or *Principles*; such I mean, as are absolutely necessary to Salvation; for we need be solicitous for no more than what will save us. Now these are both few and plain. For as for those numerous places of Scripture, Notices of Oral Tradition, which are dark and difficult, they are no further necessary to be understood in their primitive intention and meaning, than that we sincerely believe, that whatsoever God thereby meant and intended, is infallibly true.

And things thus truly necessary, are as few as plain: St. Paul has reduced them

them to Two Articles: To believe that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of all them that come unto him. And to whom only thus much is given, it shall not be damnable that they believe no more. And if this (as it seems to) be the lowest degree of Faith, God will therewith be pleased, if the means be wanting of rising higher. *Cornelius* in *Acts* 10. who because of his Alms and Prayers was accepted of God, had not been safe in that State, had he gone no further, after God had sent *St. Peter* to inform him what he was to do more. The Charities and Devotions performed in the time of his Jewish Profelytism, how far they might have stood him in stead, had he been vouchsafed no farther *Illumination*, is not the Question; yet if he had staid there, when means of going farther was afforded him, or if he had refused to believe in Christ after a sufficient Revelation, he had then justly incurred the condemnation of loving *Darkness* more than *Light*, when *Light* was come unto him. These instances are usual in this matter, and tell us plainly, That as few Articles are of absolute necessity, yet that their number is not the same unto all; some more, some less, as God hath given to every man, all that

that is necessary for a Man to believe, which for that purpose is sufficiently revealed unto him, and which God requires him to believe and practise. But there is none can set down how much every man should believe, no more than he can set down how much every man should eat.

But if notwithstanding this paucity and plainness of the Principles of Religion, any should therein be still contentious, this Evil is not to be removed by Disputation, but plain Catechising; whereby the Mysteries of Faith, and the Duties of Holy Life are to be explained. For Catechism is a brief and plain Institution appointed for that end; and it takes care that the Principles of Religion be made so easie, that the meanest capacity may apprehend them; and yet in so concise and short a manner, that the weakest Memory may not therefore be furcharged.

C H A P.

C H A P. X.

Disputation unfit for the capacity of the generality of Dissenters : Catechising proper, &c. Reasons against Disputes.

IN the last place, it will not a little import the clearing of the present subject, to enquire into the nature of Disputes, and their Capacities who should thereby be wrought upon. As to the former, it will suffice to observe, that Disputation must be guided by *Terms* and *Rules of Art*, which when managed with the greatest plainness whereof they are capable, fall short of that obviousness and familiarity, which is natural to Catechisin. And as to the latter, it is very remarkable, 1. That the vulgar and common People make incomparably the greater number of *Dissenters*. 2. That the Understandings of such are usually heavy, gross, and dull, as symbolizing with their Callings and Conditions; and by consequent, are unable to comprehend any profound and learned conclusions. And what is yet more considerable, the greatest part of *Dissenters* have no clear understanding
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of the very Errors which a *Logical Disputation* would confute. The most of them being ignorant of their own Opinions, and of the things against which they have imbib'd a secret and spiteful prejudice. For it was, and is still the policy of those who seduce the Vulgar into Faction and Schism, not to acquaint them further with the Opinions they were to abet, than to let them see that they were contrary to what they disliked in the Church. Insomuch that the poor Vulgar being deluded into *Separation*, retain but a very confused and imperfect Notion of what with great impetuoufness they strive both for and against. And therefore it must needs be a very Melancholly Enterprife, to go to confute their Errors with depth of Argument, who are in a great measure ignorant of the very Errors themselves, and who do not distinctly know the opinions whereof they are to be convinced. The case of such people much resembling theirs, whom *St. Paul* thought to stand in need of Milk, and not of strong Meat; of a *Catechism* and not a *Controversie*; and to be taught Christianity from the very beginning. And the same Author being to confute those miscreant Hereticks, who said the Resurrection was already past, and there-
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upon gave themselves to lewd living ; he did it not with the heat and briskness of a Disputant, but with the gravity and moderation of an Apostle : and having barely and calmly named the wild Opinions, he positively and plainly laid down those Truths that confronted them, 2 *Tim.* 11. 18, 19. And he would have the *Gnostick* Hereticks to be encountred with Ecclesiastick Censures or Discipline, and not Disputings, *whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmises*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 4, 5. *Tit.* 3. 10.

If we were to set down the several *Confessions* of the *Perswasions* of all the Christians in the World, they will be found to agree in more than is purely and simply necessary to Salvation. And it may seem very vain to dispute and quarrel about the rest. And therefore the whole business may be resolved into a diligent, sincere, and plain *Instruction*, how we ought to practise what we all acknowledge to be true ; and to fall close to doing those duties which are unquestionable, and of universal acceptance. To perform what in Baptism we vowed, and live what we profess to believe. To make our selves fit to be justified, and not waste time in controverting all the particulars that are made to relate to

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Justification. There is a knowledge in Religion which many earnestly pursue, without which thousands have entered into happiness. We need seek for no more therein, than will perform the great work of Salvation, and bring us to the *end of our Hope*. And all this is either most assuredly to be had in our own *Catechism*, or we have been most dangerously imposed upon.

But before we dismiss this Topick, there are a few things more, chiefly relating to the persons to be converted; which methinks ought to give Catechising precedency of Controversie in that affair. And the first thing is the long standing of the Errors: For if the person has suck'd them in with his Milk, and been therewith at the first season'd, then there is Education in the case, upon whose account alone not a few stick close both to truth and falshood: and if their Ancestors have lived and died, and they have been brought up in such a perswasion, it is, and indeed ought to be hard to remove it. One main reason why the Pagans were so backward to entertain Christianity, was its enjoining them to renounce those Institutions wherein they had been educated, and their Fore-fathers had lived, and thought them-

themselves secure and happy. And *Trypho* derided *Justin Martyr* for a man of an easie Perswasion, and too much Inconstancy, because he forsook *Plato* and embraced *Christ*. And *Cæcilius* in *Minutius Felix*, would have his *Antistes Veritatis*, a firm adherent to the Principles which his Ancestors had delivered him. And they whose Pens were so excellently employed in confutation of Paganism, have generally complained that their greatest sweat was to pull down the *strong hold* of Education; it being become the last refuge of Gentilism, out of which they would not be driven: For they resolutely retained what they had received from their Ancestors. For both *Jew* and *Mahumetan* are at this day of the same Opinion: For the former makes prescription his Religion; and thinks it enough to out-face all Arguments brought against it, because so many Rabbies live and die therein. and the latter has recourse to his Education, and thinks himself secure in what he doth, because he follows the Footsteps of those many Cenerations that went before him. Indeed, all men are willing to die in the Religion wherein they were born. And *Cæcilius's Pri-oribus credere* goes far with Christians, as well

well as others; the first seasoning being incomparably more prevailing than any second.

Now, if those evil Opinions are to be removed, in which we have been educated; it can never be so well accomplished by tearing them down with the strength of Logick, as by instilling such easie Principles, necessary and uncontroverted points, with simplicity and plainness, as of themselves will subvert the Errors of the first Instruction, and become the foundation of future Peace and Truth. And no way of teaching can so naturally be hereunto entituled as Catechising. For as to Disputation, it is generally had under a jealous aspect, as being thought subtle and reaching, and intended rather to celebrate a Triumph, than to effect a Conversion; and to advance the Disputer, not the Truth. Besides, it being so apt to mingle and blend with captious Sophisms, and false, but specious ways of *proving*, that men are ready to account it Imposture, not Conviction, that by such means is effected. And as for Preaching, a new Chapter will manifestly make it appear not to be so proper for this purpose as most imagine. But in Catechising there is such an honest simplicity, clear and

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plain way of procedure, that none can therein suspect any Sophism or *artificial dealing*; disguises or shadowings.

In the next place, most men are either so modest in the apprehension of their own abilities, or so fearful to be ensnared in the great concerns of Religion, that they are unwilling to depend upon their own judgments in those instances, especially which they see are most disputed and questioned. And therefore they think it no sufficient Reason to forsake an Opinion, because they cannot answer all the Objections, which by the subtle Advocate of a different Perswasion are brought against it. And so long as a man can really believe that there are others who can answer what is objected against his Opinion, he will never quit it, because he cannot answer it himself. For to think an Argument cannot be answered, because not by me, were to think the Lady must be carried by none, because neither A. nor B. can win her; as if there were no more men in the world sufficient for that purpose, but they two.

But if Disputation should be able to force men from these refuges, and to cast away the groundless Opinions they embrace; yet if their Opinions twist
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with some worldly Interest, and yield any secular advantage; if the Opiniatres can say, *By this craft we get our wealth*; then great is *Diana*, and your Argument is answered.

And he who considers how many temporal ends men serve with their Opinions, will have little hope to confute them, at least by a way which is so generally suspected.

If the Opinion please the humour of an eating Avarice, or a swelling Ambition; and bring either Wealth or Honour.

If it make its Abettors notorious for singularity, or get them a Vogue of being more Holy and Religious than their Neighbours.

If it place them in the pretended number of Sufferers and Persecuted.

If it gratifie their Spleen, and give them but a more plausible pretence to be stubborn, refractory, contradicting of Authority, gainstayers of the establish'd Religion, &c. then the cure must begin with the Affections and not the Judgment; and therefore a Dispute is no fit Prescription. All that by Argument can be effected, before the *Passion* be duly chastised, will but bring the Opinionist to this: I see and approve the better,

but follow the worse; my *Passions* are too powerful for my *Reason*.

We might here also add, how Quarrels in Christian Religion contradict the Errand whereon it was sent into the World, which was for Love and Peace; to reconcile men to God, and among themselves. And if it yield contrary Fruits, they come as the Tares among the Wheat, by the craft and malice of the wicked One. For Strifes and Controversies are no more the effects of Religion, than of the Law: Were all men just and honest, we needed not disturb the Ashes of a moth eaten Statute; and had we no Self-ends and Interests, no base passions and designs, the itch of Disputation would not disquiet and make us so restless.

Before we close up this Chapter, it will not be much impertinent to observe how Disputation was at first opening of the Reformation an excellent Engine to advance it: And we find that the Reformers made importunate suits for publick Audience and judgment; and the offer of open Disputation greatly assured the People of the soundness of their Cause, when they saw they were ready to put it upon publick Tryal. And more may be supposed to have followed the

the first Essays of the Reformation, out of an Opinion that it was good and true, being defended with such freedom, simplicity and assurance, than by the strength of those Arguments which were at first brought to assert it. But then it is to be considered that the Reformers offer'd this kind of tryal to those with whom they began to be at no less distance, than with members of a distinct and different Communion; and in places where they were in hope to gain, but in no danger to lose Profelytes. For they wisely invaded the Adversary in his own Country, and challeng'd him to a Dispute in his own Cities, and in the throng of his Adherents. But upon how different Terms Disputes can now be managed, either with Dissenters or the common Enemy, I leave the truly confiderate to determine. But since we are resolved to fight, I could wish our valour were more discreet, than to encounter the Enemy within our own Bowels; to controvert our Religion in the place where it is legally established. A thing not heard of in other Countries, where there is a greater Peace and more outward Religion. But I shall close up this Topick with setting down what is usually observed upon this Subject, *viz.*

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1. That Religion is like neither to get nor save by Disputes. 2. That Disputes on this subject may have the ill-luck to make some suspect the truth of all Religion, because it is so much controverted. For weaker Heads seeing the Roof totter, are apt to suspect there is no firmness in the foundation ; and to conclude nothing is certain, if any thing be question'd. 3. That in so great a mist of Disputes, many may grow halting and luke-warm, and think it their only safety to stand still, or sit down in Neutrality. 4. That for one sin Disputes have cured, they have begot innumerable. 5. That the strength and practice of Religion have been sensibly impaired, since by the distemper'd heats of Mens Spirits it hath been rarified into subtil Controversies. 6. That suspense of Judgment, and exercise of Charity were safer and seemlier for Christian men, than the hot pursuit of those Controversies, wherein they that are most fervent to dispute, are not always the most able to determine. But what is more natural to the present purpose, it should seriously be considered, That the People are neither to be confuted of their false, nor established in the true Notices of Religion, by *Doubtful Disputes*, but *plain Catechistical*

tebistical Doctrines. And as to our selves of this Church, seeing there can come nothing of our Contentions, but the mutual waste of the parties contending, till a common Enemy dance in the Ashes of us both; I shall ever wish, and most heartily pray, that the strict commands of Peace and Unity, so frequent in the Gospel, may at the last so prevail in this Nation, to the burying and utter oblivion of strife, together with the causes that have either bred or brought it up: That things of small moment never disjoyn them, whom one God, one Lord, one Faith, one Spirit, one Baptism, bands of so great force, have linked together: That a respective Eye towards things wherewith we should not be disquieted, make us not unable to speak peaceably one to another. Finally, that no strife may ever be heard of again, but who shall hate strife most, and pursue peace with the swiftest paces.

C H A P. XI.

Preaching, what it is : the several ways thereof used by the Church. What kind of Preaching among the Old Jews, and Primitive Christians. The Homilies considered.

HAVING in the antecedent Chapter discharged Disputes and Controversies from being any suitable and proper means of reducing the Dissenters of our own Church, or winning the Members of the Roman : The next thing pretending to our healing is Preaching, which I here take to be *An open, solemn and Authoritative publication of Divine Mysteries.* And this the Church doth two several ways : 1. As a Witness. 2. As an Expofitor.

And first, The Church Preacheth as a Witness, by publick reading the Sacred Scriptures, and by relating and testifying the Divine Truths which God in the inspired Volumes hath consigned her. And that this is no spurious sense of Preaching, we have him to assure us, who well understood the sense and importance both of the *Word* and *Thing*.
For

For in *Acts* 15. 21. the reading of *Moses* in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day, is by *St. Paul* in the genuine and native signification of the Word, styled Preaching. That this Preaching of *Moses*, was a naked reading of his Law, we have a whole cloud of Expositors to attest it, besides the clearness of the thing it self. But I cannot be of their judgment who assert, That neither the Ancient nor Modern Jews had any such thing as weekly Preaching upon any part of the Law of *Moses*, and that upon this ground solely conclude the preaching of *Moses* to be meer reading. For we find that the Old Jews had divers Men among them, who used to contribute their Talents to the Exposition of the Lesson that was read: and these in ordinary course were the Sons or Scholars of the Prophets, who were trained up in learning of the Law, and at the age of Thirty received the Title of Doctors; and till they obtained the Grace of immediate Inspiration, or the Spirit of Prophecie, they continued to expound the Scriptures (not by Revelation, but) according to that knowledge which the ordinary blessing of God upon their Studies was able to compass. Answerable whereunto (as some think) was that custom

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custom among the Christians, mentioned 1 Cor. 14. 29. And also those Disciples of the Prophets of the New Testament called Doctors, because they were admitted to teach in the Church. But for mine own part, I rather understand the Word Doctor in St. Paul, of all such Presbyters as had abilities of Preaching and Teaching the People in their Assemblies. And that Presbyters and Doctors were all one, we may conclude from *Tertull. de Prescript. c. 3. Quid ergò si Episcopus, &c.* What then if a Bishop, if a Deacon, if a Widow, a Virgin, if a Doctor, if even a Martyr shall fall from the Rule? In this Catalogue of principal Ecclesiastick Orders, Presbyters must be understood by Doctors, unless we will deny them to have any room among the chief Ranks of the Church; which were both false and absurd. And that incestuous person, with an Opinion of whom the *Corinthians* were put up, was (as is observed out of *Chrysostom* and *Theoderet*) one of their Doctors, that is, one of the Presbyters of that Church, that exercised the Office of Preaching, and by that means bore a great sway among the People,

But to return to the *reading of Moses*, which began with the Moral Service of the

the Synagogue; when we find that the Mosaical Law was distinguished into Divisions answerable to the number of Weeks in the Year, that the whole Law in that space might be read over: correspondent to which Lessons out of the Law, there were others out of the Prophets: one of which the Holy Jesus took for his Subject at *Nazareth*, when after the manner of the Jewish Doctors he made his Exposition, *St. Luke 4. 16.* And he did the like, *St. Mat. 9. 35.* where he is said to teach [*Διδάσκων*] in the Synagogue; which might be done without any pretension to such Authority as was supposed in *Κήρυξεν*, in Preaching; which in the Christian use of the word in the New Testament differs from Teaching. Christ did both, *St. Mat. 9. 35.* He taught the Law, and preacht the Gospel: At Thirty years old he expounded *Moses*, as a Doctor (before which time the ancient Church made none Presbyters) and at the same time he preacht the Gospel of the Kingdom. But still the matter is plain enough, that the bare reading of *Moses* in the Synagogues, is Preaching in the proper meaning: which sort of Preaching is still practised in the appointed Lessons of the Church. The former out of the Old Testa-

Testament, being derived like many wholesom things from the Synagogue; and the Second Lesson out of the New Testament, which was appointed, as most suppose, by the 16th Canon of the Council of *Laodicea*, celebrated in the year of Grace 364. *Albeit Justin Martyr* (who lived in the Second Age) seems to give the Lessons an elder date. For in his second Apology, he tells us, how all those who abide in Cities, and the adjacent Countries, meet in one place, on the day called Sunday; and the Ἀπομνημονεύματα, the Memoires and Records of the Apostles, together with the πρὸς γράμματα, the Writings of the Prophets are read unto them, as far as the time and occasion serves: And that the Reader ceasing, the President in a Speech makes an Exhortation that they would imitate those good things which had been read. From which it is evidently to be concluded, that the Church in the first and best Ages of Christianity preacht as a Witness, when she read, and thereby attested the truth of the Holy Scriptures. And all men are in some degree capable thereby to be edified. For there is none understands the Scriptures so well, but he may improve by hearing them read in the Church. And
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if we look into the Efficacy of the *Word*, it is wonderful that it should be less as it is read, than as it is expounded; seeing that the one is the Word of God as it was inspired by the Holy Ghost, and the other can no farther be so accounted, than as it keeps close to the sense and meaning thereof; which is not so easie, so long as Men are subject to Errors and Mistakes, and have base Ends to serve, and carnal Circumstances to be accomplished.

2. But because all men ought to have such a knowledge in God's Word as may be sufficient to Salvation: and because all will not attain to so much by bare reading thereof, therefore the Church Preacheth as an Expositor, by discovering and explaining what in Sacred Scripture is mysterious and obscure; and by a seasonable application of those things which are more obvious and evident. And in this sense Preaching is an Office in our own Church, which cannot be too highly magnified, nor too frequently celebrated, if it be agreeable to those Homilies which were intended, not only to supply those who have not the Gift of Preaching, sufficiently to instruct the people committed to their Cure; but also to be a wholsom Rule, by which e-
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ven those who are able to preach should guide themselves in that publick Ministry.

But if Discourses at this day made in Pulpits ought only so far forth to be accounted Preaching, as they are agreeable to the Churches Sermons; then all is not Preaching which bears that name, and takes up the Circumstances thereunto allowed.

In the pious Sermons of the Church, we find Principles of Christianity solidly explained, Rules and Motives of honest and holy Life clearly laid down, and Perorations and Perswasions to continue therein, devoutly and charitably directed and applied. I shall not draw this into comparison; but only say, That I hope there is none need think it any diminution or disparagement to his Parts and Learning, to write after such a Copy. And however the Homilies may be decried through popular Ignorance, Prejudice, and Passion, yet no doubt but they are still necessary upon their first design, which was to help the Inabilities of some, to restrain the Indiscretions of others, and to take away those strifes about what is fitting to be preacht, caused by the variety of Mens Judgments, the extravagance of their Fancies, and the Byasses of several Interests. And

And as for the Homilies of this Church, they deserve a much better esteem than generally they receive ; and would need no elaborate Vindication, if duly considered in their circumstances. For in the first place, they are to be looked upon as popular Sermons, fitted unto the Capacities and Conditions of the Vulgar ; who being more led by Passion than Reason, have need of such Discourses, as will rather regulate their will, than inform their judgment. They standing in more need to have their Hearts and Consciences wrought upon for good Life and Conversation, than their understanding and apprehension with any curious piece of Learning or Science. And that the greatest share of the Church-Homilies deals herein, there will need no other proof than their diligent perusal.

In the Second place, The Church-Homilies are not to be looked upon as her Dogmatical Resolutions and Positions, but as they contain godly and wholesom Doctrine [Teaching] and necessary for the times when they were composed. For so much we are taught in the 35. Article. And therefore I humbly suppose, that every passage in the Homilies is not to be pressed for the Faith.

Faith and Doctrine of the Church, but that the whole ought to be considered as confronting the evil Opinions and Manners that at their composing were held and practised: and if ought of either be remaining, the Homilies may still be needful upon their Primitive account.

In the last place, the very time in which the Homilies were compiled may excuse many a Period therein. For our Ancestors were lately come out of Popery, and conversed daily with Persons of that Perswasion; and therefore severe dehortations were requisite to preserve them from Apostacy into those Practices out of which they had so lately been recovered: which makes it no wonder if Enforcements and Exhortations to that purpose, &c. are sometime too hardly stretched. And as for mine own part, I am so far from undervaluing the pious Sermons of the Church, that considering their circumstances, I greatly esteem them for their own *Worth*, and respect them above any other for their *Authority*.

And as to those who reject Homilies upon the account that Apochryphal Writings are not to be used in the Church, it may suffice briefly to reply,

i. That

1. That Apochryphal Writings were publickly read in the Church in Primitive times: as the Epistle of *Clemens* in that of *Corinth*.

2. That *Hermes* (the same whom St. *Paul* saluted, *Rom.* 16. 14.) his *Pastor* was publickly read in the Churches, and used by some of the most ancient Writers, and thought highly necessary. *Vide Euseb.* l. 3. c. 3. What may be said to this purpose of the *στοιχείων συγγραμματα* of *Theophilus B. of Antioch*, I leave to the judgment of others. *Vid. Euseb.* l. 4. c. 23.

3. That in the Reformed Churches (not long since) *Calvins* Sermons upon *Job* were publickly read, by which means (saith *Beza* in his Preface to those Sermons) the want of Preachers was supplied.

4. That it is all one to the People, whether the Sermon was made and printed in 1587, or on the last Sunday-Eve; whether it be out of a Book, or *ex tempore* of the Brain, if thereby they be truly edified. The Council of *Vans* appointed the Homilies of the Fathers to be read by the Deacons in those Churches, where the Presbyters through infirmity were absent, *Concil. Vassu.* c. 4. *Vid. Mr. Hooker Eccles. Pol. lib.* 5.

5. That

5. That there is more security in a *Homily* than a *Lecture*; as there is in the Learning, Piety and discretion of many, than a single person. In short; there can be no mischief in the word [*Homilies*] seeing the best Sermons (*St. Chrysostoms*) that ever were writ by any but an inspired Pen, bear that Title. *Homileticus* and *Tractator* are often used indifferently: and the latter is sufficiently known to signifie a Preacher, as *Tractare* to Preach, among the Writers of the Latin Church. And the Exposition *Augustine* made upon *St. John* is called *Tractatus*, &c. And the Reason of the Name, was the handling of the Scriptures that had been read; the custom being to Expound or Preach upon such Portions of Scripture as were appointed for the Lessons of the Day; as hath been observed out of *Justin Martyr's* Second Apology. Something of this has been in use with our own Church, when the Sermon was spent in pressing the intencion of the Gospel for such a day unto the people; which is still the custom of the Romanists.

But leaving every one to his own Sentiment herein, I cannot perceive why in stead of villifying the old Homilies, we should not rather desire a supply of

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new ones : such as may contain a familiar Orthodox instruction in the whole Body of Christian Doctrine, and of all the capital Duties therein required ; That thereby an Uniform way of instruction might be maintained as no unlikely means both to regain and preserve Peace and Unity in this Church.

But without further pursuing the notion of Preaching, we will here understand it in the most trodden and common acception, namely, as *A way of instructing the people contradistinct to Catechising* ; and to which it *stands in usual comparison as strong meat to Milk*. Now that Preaching in this obvious sense is no proper means to recover us of our Dissensions, and to beget in us a sober and fixed Judgment in the things of Religion (as it is generally supposed) comes to be made manifest in this following Chapter.

C H A P.

CHAP. XII.

Preaching insufficient to restore our Dissenters. Catechising proper for that purpose, &c. A Scruple removed.

That Difference which Divines make of things necessary to Salvation, either as a *Means* without which it cannot be had at all, or as *Commands* without whose observation those cannot be saved to whom those Commands are given, might have place here, if we were to speak of Preaching, as by some it is looked upon, for an Instrument without which not one poor Soul can be delivered from destruction, nor any Sabbath hallowed either by Priest or People as God requireth. Which was the Opinion of T. C. and is still of his Profelytes. But it belongs not to the purport of this *Discourse*, to set down how far *Preaching* (in the common Notice) is necessary as a means of Salvation: For then we must descend to particular Persons, in respect of whom the true value of its *necessity* must be taken, seeing that none will say it can be alike necessary to the Salvation of all.

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There is none shall give more to the worth and necessity of Preaching, and be more frequent therein than my self. But yet I doubt not, but that a man may be saved without it. For if a person who in his Infancy hath received Holy Baptism, at years of *Discernment*, shall by *Catechism* be minded of all that he then *vowed* and *promised*, and be careful to *believe* and *do* them, I see not what such a Person wants of being set in a state of Salvation, that with equal esteemers can be accounted necessary as a means thereof; tho' he *knew* no more of Preaching, than they in *Act. 19.* did of the Holy Ghost.

But let Preaching be a means never so necessary to save our Souls; yet that it is not so suitable and proper to reform and fix our erroneous and inconstant Judgments (as is conceived) seems clear and evident upon the force and obviousness of this single instance; namely, That those who have been, and still are the greatest admirers of popular Preaching, and the most eager hearers of many Sermons, and the most restless followers of several *Lecturers*, have notwithstanding all this, been, and are, 1. The most inconstant, 2. The most erroneous in their Opinions.

And first, as for their Giddiness and Unconstancy, there needs no other demon-

demonstration thereof, than their rowling from one Opinion to another. For if they have stuck fast to any one, yet that being evil, their adherence thereunto ought not to be accounted *Constancy*, but *Perverseness*.

Now if we enquire into the cause of this fickleness of judgment so notorious among the zealous Sermonists, and *Vulgar Sectaries*, we shall find that it is a want of Catechizing; and that they were never duly instructed in those Primary Principles of Religion, which would have rightly inform'd and established their Judgments. Through the want whereof, they have proved like unballasted Vessels, liable to be tossed, torn, and blown about with every gust of contrary Doctrine, vented by those who were crafty to deceive; and who have proved themselves to be lineally descended of those great pretenders to Godliness and Knowledg (mention'd in the Inspired and Ecclesiastick Scriptures) and egregiously character'd, for *creeping into houses, and seducing silly women, who were ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledg of the Truth.* Vide *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 2. lib. 3, & 4.*

Nor need it create our wonder that such persons are so bad proficient in Religion

ligion, seeing they began to learn it at the wrong end, and ran to the Lecture before they had been at the Catechism. And indeed it cannot be imagined that those should make any laudable progress either in Divine or Humane Knowledge, who in the Rudiments and first grounds thereof, have had either none, or a very slight Education.

And as the most unsatiable Hearers of Sermons have proved wavering and unconstant in their judgments, for want of a timely and through Catechizing; so likewise upon the same ground they have been very erroneous and Opinionative. For this want of a plain *Institution* in the Principles of Truth, hath left them destitute of a proper Test, whereby they might be able to explore and try what is preacht, and to separate the *pretious* from the *vile*. Through the want whereof, they as greedily imbibe a false as true Doctrine; and are ready to change their Opinions according to the impression which the affectionate noise of the last Sermon has made upon their *Senses*.

Nor are they happier in their reading Holy Scriptures, than in hearing of them (thus) preacht. The Un-catechized run upon the same Rock in both.

For

For albeit the *Divine Word* is in it self the pure Fountain of all *saving Truths*: yet persons not trained up in a competent apprehension of Catechistical Principles, make it a sink of pernicious Errors; sucking Contention from the Breasts of Peace; turning the sincere Milk of Gods Word into the Poyson of Asps, and perverting the *Scripture* to their own destruction; while they make the Oracles of God not to speak their own, but such a Sense and Language, as may best adjust their Designs and *Interests*.

And as no malice proves more implacable than that which ariseth out of the Ashes of an Apostate love: So no Errors are more dangerous than those which proceed from a wrong interpreting and application of *the Word of Truth*. And as those whose fancy has been playing with sounds, think every thing they hear is tunable to their fancy: So those whose minds are once infected with evil Opinions, think every Text speaks according to the Opinions wherewith they are infected. And it is an Hypothesis will meet with few Adversaries, That Men who are prejudiced and prepossessed with Errors in Religion, cannot be reduced but by getting them therein

therein rightly principled, which was never yet attempted but by solid and perspicuous Catechizing; it being by this that Men prove in Religion like the House in the Gospel founded upon a Rock, which by no force of storms and winds could be subverted. And therefore if this *ground-work* be not surely laid, all *superstructures* in Religion lie upon the loose Sand, and are easily washed away by the insinuating suggestions of false Teachers. And what is yet further to be considered, we see the rest of the *Building* sink with the Foundation: if that be shaken, all will go to ruine. And Christians not well grounded in the Elements of Truth and Holiness, will quickly be perswaded to give themselves up to any wild Opinion, or loose Practice, and turn Schismatick or Traytor, to the great hazard and confusion both of Church and State.

But if it be objected that Catechizing is a Plaister too narrow for our Sore, because it cannot reach those whose Age, or some other Circumstance, excludes them the number of those for whom this sort of *Instruction* is appointed, notwithstanding they have no less need thereof than others: To this it will be enough to return the succeeding considerations, *viz.*

F. I. That

1. That the Church obviated this Scruple, when in the last Edition of the Liturgy, she appointed the Catechism to be learned of *every person*. And in her Fifty ninth Canon enjoyn'd the Clergy to instruct all the ignorant Persons of their Parishes in the publick Catechism. And that those who bear the heavy load of many years might not decline this way of *Institution*, they may see it founded in the Apostolical practice; which was to Catechize the adult; as before was observed.

2. To be duly instructed in the Principles of Christianity, is a duty incumbent upon all, who by the *Knowledge* and *Practice* thereof hope to be eternally saved. And therefore if the Aged be therein ignorant, they have more reason to blush at their ignorance, than to be thus instructed; and with diligence and humility to wait at this *Gate of Knowledge*, rather than with scorn to disdain it.

3. If the Elder sort have either not been taught at all, or have forgot the chief Heads and Catechetical Fundamentals of Christianity, they now meet with a fair occasion both to learn and call them to mind. For by being present and attentive in hearing the Young-
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er Catechized, the Ancient (and all) may be brought to know what they do not understand, to remember what they have forgot, and to be inform'd in what they have erred. So that at the same time Catechising will instruct the *Ignorant*, remember the *Forgetful*, and inform the *Erroneous*: and therefore administer a Physick proper and sutable to our several Maladies: which cannot be pretended to by those other Methods, that have hitherto been so eagerly pursued.

CHAP. XIII.

The Benefits of Catechizing, 1. In respect of the Civil State. 2. The Clergy. 3. The People. The Mischiefs of private Schools. Objections against the constant practice of Catechizing removed.

BUT besides what has been discoursed, there are other *good Effects* of Catechising, which at least may be as so many motives to enforce its practice.

And in the first place, Catechising is in an eminent manner conducive to the Peace and Welfare of the State; because it takes care that the Younger sort, who are the hopes of a Nation, be duly edu-

cated in those Principles, on whose practice the safety and happiness of a State depends. For to sow in the pure minds of *Youth* the Seeds of Vertue and Truth, before the Tares of Vice and Error, and the Weeds of the *World*, have canker'd and spoiled the Soil, is by the consent of all wise men, a point of incomparable force and moment for the well-ordering and Government of all kind of Societies, and for making Commonwealths ever flourishing and happy. For by the means of Catechising, the Younger sort will be planted and grow up in a due Conformity and Obedience to the Laws in being; which is undeniably a proper expedient to uphold *States* in the Terms wherein they are, and to free them from the danger of being so easily obvious to alteration and change. For the Opinions, of what nature soever, wherewith we are first season'd, are of double force to any second Perswasion and *Usages*. And this makes the *Spanish* Nation early and careful in Catechising their Children; by which Method (ever since its use) they have not suffer'd the least *disturbance* and *alteration* in Church or State. That *serious* people having largely experienced the Truth of their own saying: *No es menos importante*

tante el ser de la Doctrina que el de la Naturalaleza. And in confirmation of this remark, it were easie to load the Margin with a numerous Quotation, and the Line with a tedious recital of many excellent Passages out of *Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Seneca, Tacitus, Agell*, and almost all the learned Heathen: *Plutarch's* Education of Children doth abridge them all. But we need not go sharpen our Tools with the Philistines, seeing an Israelite can do it better. For *Solomon* is plain, That the way to have Men Religious and Honest; to be peaceable both in Church and State; is from their Childhood to train them up (the Margin) to Catechize them, in the Duties that they owe unto both, *Prov. 22. 6.* And the Ecclesiastick and Politick Parents, as well as the Natural, will find great safety in observing the wise advice of *Ben Sirach.* *Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat on the sides while he is a child; lest he wax stubborn, and disobedient, and so bring sorrow to thine heart.* *Ecclus. 30. 12.* But there needs hereof neither illustration nor enlargement. And therefore we shall close this Period with that excellent Spaniard, *Son los afetos en la Ninez como el Veneno, &c.* Vices in Youth are as poyson, which

if it once take seisure of the Heart, the paleness it introduceth no Physick can remove. *Saavedra, Idea de un prin. pol. Christ. p. 8.*

Obedience, by a Catholick agreement, is the *Crown* and *Pillar*, the *Glory* and *Strength* of all Government. But this Obedience can never be firm and durable, if it be not founded in Conscience. For according to the information of *this*, we shall find the expresses of the *other*. And notwithstanding that unparallel'd Villanies have been every where acted under the pretence of Conscience, yet this is so far from making it reasonable to neglect and deride Conscience, that it should engage us by all good means to have it so regulated and instructed, that it may be no less serviceable to Peace and Union than it hath been (the pretence) to carry on Dissention and Schism. And we need not doubt but a right Conscience will as powerfully oblige to *Peace*, as an erroneous instigate to *Sedition*: And that if Men were once fully Catechised in the Duties of the *Second Table*, they would no longer be able to resist the Ecclesiastick or Secular Power under the *Banner* of Conscience.

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In the second place, an Unanimous use of Catechising the People in the same things, will not a little redound to the credit of the Clergy. For by this means they will testifie to the World their *Harmony* and *Consent* : That they all teach the same things ; and are not, as for lack hereof some imagine, like the Naturalists two-headed Serpent, pulling contrary ways, but all looking on the same Objects as the Seraphims on the Mercy-Seat.

And doubtless one end of a Church-Catechism was to preserve an Uniform procedure in teaching the Common grounds of Religion. It being requisite and convenient, that they who profess but one God, one Christ, one Baptism, and one Gospel, should consent and be trained up in one Catechism. The inconvenience arising from the use of divers, being observed by Pope *Clemens* the Eighth, caused him to have a Catechism compiled, which, exclusive of all others, should be taught in all those Countries that call themselves Catholick. *Ut sublata modorum docendi varietate, uniforme, faciliusq; instruendi idiotas & simplices de rebus fidei exercitium reddatur* ; saith the *Congregatio Reformationis*, which revised and approved it,

And in the *Geneva* Liturgy, we find their Pastors limited not only to the same Catechism, but also to how much thereof they shall teach every *Lords day*, without any interpolations of their own. A thing which ought carefully to be provided for in our own Church: For if the Clergy be either left to a liberty of using divers Catechisms, or to use the Churches as they please; and under a pretence of the *legal Instruction*, take a more secure occasion to instil into the minds of the unwary people their own Opinions and Fancies, they may most maliciously deceive the intention of the Church, and for feeding, poyson their *Congregations*. They will prove false to their trust, and most perniciously contradict the name they bear. For the Clergy are Catechists in the most important sense of their Office, and are bound by that Title not to found their own words, but to eccho and repeat what the Church has spoken; not only the Words and Syllables, but the sense and meaning.

But if the Clergy were never so unanimous and diligent both in the interpretation and practice of the Catechism, the benefit thereof will not be so visible, while there are those who unteach in private what is taught at Church. Which
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is the undermining practice of many of those *Petite* Schools, wherewith the Nation is furcharged and abused. The most whereof being subservient to no better end than to give the *Youth* an ill seasoning as well in the Rudiments of Religion as Grammar. And albeit the redressing of this mischief has been piously recommended by the Sovereign Head of this Church, to *Persons* proper for that purpose; yet it is to be feared that the issue will be rather an *Encrease* of *Licenses*, than any *Abatement* of *undue School-Teachers*, contrary to the 77 and 79. Canons.

Till *Israel* wanted Smiths of their own, they never went to the *Philistins* to sharpen their Mattocks. It seems no less a want of Policy than Affection in the Church, while her own Breasts are full to suffer her Children to suck such Nurses, as with their Milk will infuse *Disobedience* against her.

The Jesuites usually say, That they never doubt to replant their Religion, where they have once planted a Colledge; because this being obtained, they will have opportunity to instruct the Youth (which is an employment they every where labour to engross to their Society) whereby they fear not but in time to eat out the Fathers *Principles* with

those they shall instil into the Son. And the present state of Affairs will easily turn this into no unseasonable Allusion.

But in the last place, the unanimous usage of the same Church-Catechism, and the modd'ling, ordering, and directing all publick Instructions according to this *Form of Sound Words*, will bring no less safety to the People, than Honour to the Clergy. For by this means the people will be delivered from the fear and peril of hearing contrary Doctrines, and consequently be edified and built up in such an Uniformity both of *Belief* and *Manners*, as may at once secure as well their Conversations as Judgments from Ungodliness and Error; which yields a fair probability of closing our present *breaches*, and preventing future.

And now seeing that the welfare of the State, the credit of the Clergy, and safety of the People do greatly importune and sollicite the practice of Catechising; there is nothing on the Clergies part that can retard it, but what I should be loath to name or imagine. But if it be said in behalf of the Laity, That Catechising being a constant repetition of the same thing, will so cloy the people, that they will grow weary of Gods House; to which we see them sufficiently

ently backward, even when they are there entertained with variety : Then I shall only wish all those of the Holy Function maturely to consider,

1. How low they have sunk in their esteem with the people, since their Office was so much devoted to please *their* humours.

2. That they ought not so much to respect the Peoples Fancies, as proficiency in Religion ; the informing of their judgments, and directing their Consciences, and not the humouring of their caprices, ought to be their chief aim and travel.

3. That they cannot deserve the Name of Guides, who are ruled by those whom they should rule : the issue whereof will be no better than that of *the blind leading*, &c.

4. That if Catechising be a way of Instruction, which will best preserve the Unity and Peace of the Church, and most solidly and securely advance the edification of the people ; then there is no need to be solicitous for any other ends or interests.

5. And as for the constant repetition and audience of the same Truths necessary to Salvation (as they are the Contents of the Church-Catechism) it may be justified by that old saying [*Nunquam satis*]

satis docetur, quod nunquam satis discitur;] Those Lessons can never be too much taught, which can never be too much learned. For repetition in this case is to make the Catechism, what indeed it is, the Words of the Wise fastned like Nails by the Masters of Assemblies. And though in all the blows of the Hammer the act be the same, yet there is no stroke superfluous, while every one tends to compleat the Work. We may bring the same quarrel against *reading Books*, and *hearing Sermons*: for they are but old matter in new words; and if stript of *Dress* and *Disguise*, they would easily be discerned to be but so many varied repetitions. In Religion, if any thing be pretended to be *new*, we may safely conclude it is *false*.

6. But to evacuate the whole Objection, a diligent Catechist will find enough in the Church-Catechism to entertain his Congregation with variety, and to delight and profit all but *itching Ears*. For it wants nothing that is requisite to defend us in our *Journey*, or to save us when come to our *long home*. And those who are therein duely instructed, will find themselves so sufficiently guarded, that no Machinations of Heresie or Schism will be able to batter or undermine them.

them. Indeed the diligent use of Catechising will be its best Vindication, and most effectually answer all Objections against it. And without all Controversie, there was never a greater necessity of enforcing what we now treat of, than the conjuncture wherein we live. For we see Satan is let loose, and lays hard at the Souls of Christians; not only by such Opinions as disturb our Peace, but would utterly destroy our Christianity. Insomuch that we have great need to speak to every one, as that famous Anchorite to his Pillars upon the approach of an Earth-quake, *Stand fast, for ye shall be shaken*: And stand fast we cannot, if we want a sure Foundation in Religion; and this cannot be expected, where it is not laid in a full and timely Catechising.

C H A P. XIV.

The Church-Catechism to be preferr'd before others, for its Authority, Usefulness, Accomplishment, Contents, &c.

BUt if after all that hath been or can be said concerning the antiquity and benefits of Catechising in general, or more

more particularly in regard of its necessity and advantages in respect of the present temperament of our own Nation, it should be disputed what Catechism ought to be of publick use : I shall return, first, that although there are many excellent Catechisms both in our own and Foreign Languages, composed by private persons, out of the consideration of the great emolument accreuing to the People from this of Teaching ; yet there is none which with those of this *Communion* ought to be of equal esteem with the Catechism of the Church, if we consider, as we ought, its Authority, Usefulness, and Accomplishment.

And in the first place, as for its Authority, the Church-Catechism hath no less pre-eminence above others, than the Decrees of Councils above the Instigations of a *private Spirit*. For the difference betwixt this and Catechisms penn'd by particular persons, is like that between the Laws and Statutes of the Kingdom, and the advice and judgment of private Subjects.

This is not to cast any imputation or disrespect upon those Catechisms penn'd by *grave and learned Divines* ; which are good in themselves, and useful in their station : but to shew, that the Church-Catechism

techism commands of us a peculiar Veneration, by reason of its publick Authority.

In the next place, by virtue of its Authority, the Church-Catechism hath an especial Usefulness, in being the common Test by which we may try who are of, or against our Communion. It is likewise an excellent Form of Religion, whereby particular persons may examine their own Opinions and Sentiments, and give an account of their *Faith* to those who would therein either *establish* or *subvert* them.

In the last place, the Accomplishment of the *Church-Catechism* greatly enhaunfeth its Commendation. For if its Contents fall under an upright Review, it will merit no less praise than those Compositures, which are so exact, that they are neither defective nor redundant. For although some have objected its deficiency, as not taking any notice of the great Points of Faith, Justification, Sanctification, &c. It may hereunto be truly answer'd, That these Points are rather briefly exprest, than totally omitted; and that it is not the omission, but the short and Orthodox Expression thereof, which is the ground of the Exception. But if the nature of a Catechism were rightly

ly weighed, it would be no Objection against the Churches, that some things are therein either more darkly or more succinctly set down. For if every point of Doctrine were in a Catechism discuss'd at length, it would lose and forfeit its Name. But besides all this, it is easie for a *Clerk* of ordinary *Industry* and *Letters* to make all those Points plain and obvious out of the *Church-Catechism*, whose want is objected against its compleatness. And we have no reason to wonder or repine, that the Church hath left something to exercise the labours and abilities of her Clergy.

But to conclude : If we maturely examine the Catechism, we shall find therein such a natural evenness in the Method and Stile, and such a consistency and soundness in the Matter, as is not in any like composition easily to be matcht. As for the Introduction, it naturally carries us to all the circumstances of our admission into the Church, shewing when, by whom, after what manner, and by what means we became Christians. Next, it acquaints us with the great Priviledges, Benefits and Duties of Christianity, as also how by solemn Vow we stand obliged to perform them. The Question is *plain* and *short* ;
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the Answer full and *pitby*. wnd the Compilers thereof have manifested a singular wisdom and care, in delivering the Rule in the fewest and plainest words. For if they had loaden it with long indicative Periods, they might at once have both puzzl'd the understanding, and oppressed the memory of those tender Capacities for whom chiefly it was designed.

If we look into the principal Chapters of the Catechism, the Church therein has followed the Copy of the best and ancientest Catechists: For like them, she hath reduced to four general Heads, all that is truly necessary to Salvation. For retrenching what is but artificially necessary to acquire the Felicity of the future state, all truly necessary thereunto, is reduceable, 1. To Faith, or things to be believed. 2. To Obedience, or things to be done. 3. To Prayer, or things to be received. 4. To Sacraments, or things to admit and establish us in the Church.

As for the things we are to believe, they are summ'd in Twelve Articles, bearing the Name of the *Apostles Creed*, because it was either of their composing, or contains the substance of all which they taught to be necessary for *single Belief*;

114 *The Primitive Institution.*

lief ; and was collected by Apostolical Men, out of their Writings, into this Form or Breviary that we now profess.

As for Obedience, the Decalogue is its Rule and Object, which compriseth a pure draught of practical Duties.

Prayer, which makes another Head of the Catechism, is an Auxiliary to the two former ; for unless we beg and obtain the Divine Assistance, we can neither believe nor obey as we ought. —

Know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thy self, nor to walk in the Commandments of God without his special Grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent Prayer. And the most absolute Form and Pattern of this Duty, is that which Christ collected when he reformed their *Euchologus*, out of the Traditions of the Elders, and recommended to his Church, and which bears his Name, *The Lords Prayer*.

The Sacraments are the fourth Head of Catechism, which God ordained in compliance with Mans infirmities and weakness. For being that those things which concern the *Endless Welfare* of the Rational Soul, are like it self of Spiritual and Divine Nature, and therefore not easily to be comprehended by those who have

have their Understanding limited by their Senses; it pleased God to appoint certain *Holy Rites* called Sacraments; which by outward and visible Signs represent unto us that inward and Spiritual Grace which he bestows upon us; and which are also means whereby we are partakers of that Grace, and Pledges to assure us of that participation.

C H A P. XV.

An Account of some Objections usually brought against the Church-Catechism.

IT hath been generally observed, That Zeal, if it be not soberly governed when it striveth against any thing, that either in reality or but appearance, opposeth Religion, doth usually proceed with so great impetuousness, that Religion it self is in danger. And as it not seldom falls out, That an over-eager desire to pluck up Weeds, doth hazard the extirpation of the good Grain; so a sinister zeal against what is Superstitious, or but so pretended to be, doth often put both the Truth and Practice of Religion into suspense and debate. And although this is an Observation which might

might be easily attested through all the *Periods* of the Church, yet we need not look so far back for Testimony thereof, if we revolve what has happened among our selves within the Annals of our Memory. For we have seen the malice of the *Detracting Spirit* of Faction and Sedition exposing every Institute of the Church to contradiction and reproach; accounting it Argument enough to abandon every thing used by the Church, on which there could any way be fasten'd the odious Names of *Popish* and *Superstitious*.

And though this might be exemplified through the whole Body of the *Churches* Liturgy, yet the present Theme obliges me to remark only such Cavils as with greater speciousness are brought against the Catechism. For as for other Exceptions, the smallness of their importance renders very needless to return them any solid answer.

Now the first thing objected against the Catechism, respects its two first Questions, which are traduced as superfluous and trifling, as being to no more purpose, than to ask what we know already, and to be informed of that which we perfectly understood before: Seeing that usually falls out, that the Catechist is
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well acquainted with the Catechumens Name, and all the circumstances of its imposition. Now seeing that Catechism is pretended to be an Abridgement, and that all know how it is the proper Duty of Abridgements to leave out nothing necessary, and to take nothing unnecessary in; the *Church-Catechism* will be far from deserving the Name of an Abridgement, if its very entrance, or any thing therein be Trivial and Redundant.

But this Objection will appear of small force and importance, when it is considered, that the Church in her Catechism observes the Method which is natural to Discourses fram'd by Question and Answer; whose entrance is ever some familiar Interrogative agreeable to the matter which is to be discoursed. And seeing that the Church in her Catechism designed to instruct the ignorant and younger sort the Principles of that Religion which they profess, it was very proper to begin her Instruction with an enquiry for that Name in which they first undertook that Profession.

And in this respect our publick Catechism is more apposite and genuine, than either the *Roman Catechism* established by
Pope

Pope Clement the Eighth, or that of Geneva annexed to their Liturgy : for after a long Preamble, the one begins with, *Quidnam Doctrina Christiana?* The other with, *Quelle est la Principale fin de la Vie Humaine?*

But the entrance of our Church-Catechism will be further vindicated from the imputation of *levity* or *superfluosness*, when it is rightly considered, That it doth naturally guide the Catechised to the knowledge of what most nearly imports him : For (as 'twere by the hand) it gently carries him to all the concerning circumstances of his admission into the Church ; by whom ; at what time ; and after what manner, he was made a Member of Christ, or received into the Congregation of his Flock, and had a Right conferr'd upon him to partake of all the Promises and Priviledges of the New Covenant. Baptism being an inauguration into that Religious Society which Christ founded.

And as we read that the People of God have from the beginning had names of special signification (as *Adam, Chava, Abram, &c.*) whereby they were put in mind of some signal mark of Gods Providence toward them, and of their bounden duty of being piously thankful :

ful: So the Catechised, when he is demanded the Name in which he became a Christian, it minds him of his obligation: 1. To depart from Iniquity, and thereby to walk worthy of that Name by which he is called. 2. To perform what in that Name he vowed and promised. 3. To examine his proficiency in that Religion into which by this name he was first initiate. 4. To express a thankful remembrance of Christs singular favour, that he so far condescended, as to call him after his own Name.

But the Catechumen may upon another account be first called upon for his name, because it is the badge and cognizance of that Holy Religion in which he is to be instructed, and of which he must give an account both to God and his Church, now and at the last. And superseding all other Reasons, those that have been thus briefly intimated, may (at least) assist to clear the first question and answer of the Catechism from the guilt of Trivialness, Vanity and Impertinency.

As to what is objected against the Second question and answer, it will be sufficient to reply, That our Church therein is conformable to the Primitive. For *Tertullian* (a Father of the Third age)

age) saith positively, That it was the custom of the Church in his time, to admit none to the benefit of the Scriptures, or to any dispensation concerning sacred and divine things, or to the scanning and examination of particular Questions of Religion, who could not first give a clear account of all material circumstances of their Reception into the Ark of Christ's Church. By whom, at what time, and after what manner they were received (which are the Ingredients of the second answer in the Church-Catechism) and whether they did stedfastly believe and maintain all those general Principles, wherein there ever was an universal and unanimous agreement among all Christians. And those who could not give an account thereof, were looked upon as such who had no right to the Communion of Christ's Church, and the Priviledges of his Kingdom. This Testimony of the Churches practice is to be seen in *Tertullian's Præsc. advers. Hæretic.* A piece which was written by him, as I conceive, before the provocations of the *Roman* Clergy tempted him to turn a *Montanist*, and to be led away with the Enthusiastick delusions of that Sect. He lived in the third age, and was so high in the esteem of the humble and

and modest St. Cyprian, that he usually called him his *Master*. Hierom. in Cat. Script. Eccles. Abraham Buchol. Chronolog.

The imposition of the Name being confined to the precise time of Baptism, is by some looked upon as an impertinent Rigor, and tassing highly of Superstition. But they would be of another mind, if without prejudice they would have recourse to the Use of the Church, which hath always given Names to those Children she admitted into her Fellowship, at the punctual time of their admission. And this will be plainly discerned, if we look back unto Circumcision (the first Characteristical Sacrament) for from the time of its Institution, to that of its legal abolishment, the Male received his name at the Celebration of that truly primitive Initiatory.

Nor doth it any way evacuate this Assertion, that we read of some who had names before they were circumcised (after that admissory Rite was appointed) as Benoni, Gershom, and the Israelites born in the Wilderness; whom we may suppose not to have wanted Names, as they did Circumcision. But as touch-

Gen. 35. 18.

Exod. 2. &

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Josh. 5. 2.

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ing the Example of *Benoni*, it affords little of Objection, seeing that at Circumcision his Name was changed. And what happen'd concerning *Gershom*, it was as the instance of the Israelites in the Desert, in this case not at all argumentative, because it was extraordinary, and when necessity forced them to dispence with Law. So that notwithstanding all this, we may conclude that Circumcision was the usual time for the imposition of Names. And the like custom has always been observed at Christian Baptism; the Church thinking it most convenient that the Baptised should at the same time receive his Christian Name, whereat he became a Christian.

But that for which the Church seems least accountable, and which makes the greatest noise, and which is objected with the fairest plausibility, is that which concerns Sureties in Baptism, whose Office is decr'd as unwarrantable, because they undertake what they cannot discharge. And the very name (of Godfathers and Godmothers) is spoken against, as a prophanation of the most Holy Name, being a Transgression of the Third Commandment. And this is an Objection which cannot be better assailed, than by laying down

down a clear Scheme of the Antiquity and Reasonableness of Sureties in Baptism.

And in the first place the antiquity of Sureties, at and for the reception of Persons into the Church, is indisputable. For if we look into the Jewish Church when she was in her best Purity, we shall find, that ever since the institution of Circumcision there were still some appointed to be present, and hold out the Male to the *Mobel* to be circumcised. And the person allotted for this Office, was some special Friend of the Fathers, who is called the Master of the Covenant (but usually in Latin, *Initiationis Arbitrator, Susceptor, Compater*,) who at the Door of the Synagogue receives the child from the women, who are permitted to go further; and entering the Synagogue, the *Susceptor* holds the child till the *Hammobel*, Circumciser, has taken away the Foreskin. And how this custom was primitively observed among the Jews, and in point of Sureties derived to the Christians, may be collected from what *Junius* has intimated upon *Esay* 8. compared with Saint *Luke* 1. from the 57 to the 60 Verse.

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Now this custom of Sureties in the Jewish Church, need not at all reflect upon the like in the Christian. Being it was in the power of the latter to retain any Rite of the former that was apparently decent, significant, and edifying. For if every thing used by the Jew were to be rejected by the Christian, then most of our Religion must be cast out of doors. For it was not the design of our great Law-giver to abolish Judaism, but to amend, supply, and heighten it. Besides, we find not that those who were, or are the greatest Impugners, and most impetuous gainsayers of Sureties in Baptism, ever did it upon the account that it was a Rag of Judaism.

But how dark and questionable this custom may seem to some in its derivation and pedigree, yet its practice is clearly to be found in the first times of Christianity. As they must needs know who have observed how frequently *σὺν τέκνῳ* and *Ἀντιστοιχοί* occur in the Greek Fathers; and *Susceptores*, *Sponsores*, and *Fidejussores*, in the Latin. And how in both, the words signify and refer to *Undertakers* at Baptism. *Platina* ascribes the Institution hereof unto *Hygin*, who, saith he, ordain'd, that at the least one *Patrimus* or *Matria* should be pre-

present at Baptism, and there hold the Infant till he was baptised. *Patrimos* and *Matrima* are old Words, which by new imposition denoted those who undertook for the Vertuous and Pious education of the Baptised.

Now if it be granted, that *Hygin* Bishop of *Rome* was the Author of Godfathers and Godmothers, then this custom is of an uncontrollable ancientness; for *Hygin* lived in the Second Age, and was a Martyr in the 144 of Salvation. And it is generally granted, that this good Bishop took occasion from those Persecutions which were heavy upon the Church, to appoint Sureties in Baptism. That in Case the Parents should fall into violent restraint, banishment, or death, there might be some to take care of their childrens instruction in the truth of that Religion into which they were initiate.

But whatever was the first occasion or ground of this Suretiship, we are certain that for its great standing in the Church, it may take place among those Primitive Rites, which were in all descending Ages to be retained. And this will appear from the very Nature and Reason of the thing it self. And a custom or Law, though it cannot be elder, yet it may safely

ly be supposed to be as old as its chief Motive and Reason.

Now the nearest Method to prove the reasonableness of this custom of Baptismal Sureties is to examine both what they do for the Child at the instant of his Baptism, and what they undertake for him for the future.

And as to what the Sureties do for the Child at the time he receives this Sacrament; *Platina* tells us, that was no more than to hold it in their arms till it was baptised, and to give it a name according, or at least not contrary to the Parents Directions. And this is a thing so harmless, that none can have any colour to quarrel or reject it.

And as for what the Sureties undertake in the child's stead for the future, it can merit no just reprehension; seeing it is no more than to be careful that the child be vertuously brought up to lead a Godly and a Christian Life, and be taught such things as are necessary to the attainment of Eternal Happiness: according to the Exhortation of the Office of Publick Baptism. And to the end that this might not be over-burthenfom to the Sureties, the Church provides that her Curates shall diligently teach whom she has baptised; and so

so to instruct them, that they may be fit for confirmation. At which time the Sureties are discharged of their Bands, because at Confirmation the Baptised answer and undertake in their own Names, what their Sureties have done in their stead.

But it may still be replied, That the Parents are fittest to engage for their Children, and that so weighty a concernment ought not to be transferr'd unto Strangers. I must confess, this was once my own Perswasion; out of which I could not argue my self, till I consider'd: 1. That by the Law both of God and Nature, Parents are obliged to instruct their children in the things of God; and therefore need not to enter into Bonds. 2. That Parents may die before their Children arrive to a capacity of being instructed; or they may be ignorant and unable, or negligent and careless to instruct them. 3. That the Parents may be corrupted with Schism and Heresie, and by reason thereof be altogether unfit to perform this Office. And indeed, if we reflect upon the temperament of the Age we live in, the Church may seem never to have had more need of Sureties for their Orthodox instruction, whom she takes into her Com-

munion. For so many Parents are infatuated with erroneous Opinions, that none are more improper to engage for the regular *Catechism* of their children than themselves. And if there were none of these Reasons herein argumentative, yet the thing it self is of so great importance, that the Church hath ever thought it insecure to have none bound but the Parents. And there are, who upon no contemptible account, esteem it very incongruous, that those should present the Child to be washt of that pollution which it derived from them. And upon this score it might be, that the Father was wont not to be admitted to be present at the Baptism of his Child, but stood at the Church-door while the Infant was carried in and baptized.

Zanchius, who was well read in the Writings of the ancient Fathers of the Church, speaking of this custom of Godfathers and Godmothers in his Commentaries upon the *Ephesians*, assures of its antiquity; that it opposeth no period of Holy Writ; that it is an Effect of the Parents love and care to their children thus to make all possible provision for their Religious Institution: That it is beneficial for the Infant in
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case of the Parents death, and an assistance to the Parents if they live: That it is a means to beget and increase mutual kindness among Neighbours; because hereby a spiritual alliance is contracted, which may greatly conduce to the propagation and maintenance of Christian charity. And we may add to all this, that not a few children would inevitably be debar'd of Holy Baptism, if none but their Parents could be admitted thereunto to present them, and to stipulate in their Names.

But it is in the next place strongly objected against what is vowed by the Sureties in behalf of the Baptized, as also that it looks very contrary to the Nature of a Vow for one to make it in behalf of another. And here not to meddle with the Nature of Vows in General, nor particularly of that of Baptism; it may sufficiently evacuate all Scruples, plainly to consider, that no more is done in this Baptismal Suretiship, than is both done and approved in Secular affairs, in which it is allowed, that Infants act by their Tutors, Proxies and Guardians, and that too in matters of no smaller concernment than Espousals and E-

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states, &c, and at a time when they are as incapable to understand and perform what is undertaken in their Names, as here at Baptism. It has also been ever thought both just and reasonable for debtors to procure others to be bound with them for payment of that for which at present they are insufficient. And we may safely suppose that God will be as merciful in such cases as our selves; and that he will as readily accept of Sureties for the Christian Education of an Innocent Infant, as we for an insufficient Debtor.

But for a more evident comprehension of the whole case, I conceive it may be thus stated. At the Font when the Infant is brought to Holy Baptism, the Sureties put on his Person, and substitute themselves into his place: They represent his Voice, and answer in his stead. [All which is to be seen in the demands and answers in the administration of Publick Baptism of Infants to be used in the *Church*.] And the Infant engageth under this Personation, That when he comes to years, he will perform the Vow and Promise thus made by his Substitutes. He and they being by
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interpretation but as one person; and therefore the Infant, when grown up, is as much bound to discharge what at Baptism was promised in his Name, as if he had done it himself. Now by this Substitution the Sureties perform a great act of *Charity*: for they do that for the child, which by no means he could do for himself; for they get him an early interest in the priviledges of Christianity, which in the ordinary way of procedure, cannot be had without Baptism: and this cannot be had without making the Vow thereof; and it is impossible for the Infant to make this Vow, but by its Proxies; who oblige themselves no further, than to see that the *Infant* be taught so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a Solemn Vow, Promise, and Profession he has made by his Substitutes, or Sureties.

And by this short account of what the Godfathers and Godmothers do for the Infant in Baptism, it is easie to apprehend, that none need withdraw from this Pious Work, for the supposed Difficulty of its Discharge. And therefore those who rightly understand this Suretiship, and
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yet refuse it, they may be thought rather to want Charity than Power; and that they are unwilling, and not unable to perform it.

Nor doth it less reflect upon their deportment, who turn this pious Custom into an idle Ceremony, by privately devolving upon the Parents, what they publickly undertook for their children; which doth at once frustrate and contradict the intendment of the Church, and delude the Congregation of God's people.

But it may be further objected, That the Vow of Baptism being made by others, renders the Performance and Observation thereof by the *Child*, a thing of constraint, and not of election: for the baptized, when grown up, doth not follow his own choice, but his Sureties; and allows of what was at Baptism promised in his behalf, not out of willingness but pre-engagement; all which is opposite to the genuine Nature of a Vow.

And in Answer to this Objection, it will be convenient to observe, That the Vow and Promise made by Sureties in Baptism is not absolute; for in an absolute sense, no man can undertake for another. But the Vow is conditional; and

and the Child when come to age, must either own it, or forfeit the benefits of Baptism. And as those who are married, being *Minors*, when come to mature years, may chuse whether the Marriage shall be ratified or rescinded: So it is in the power of the Baptized at years of discretion, to acknowledge or renounce the Vow of Baptism. If he allow of, and consent to what at holy Baptism was vowed in his Name (which is still supposed at the making of the Vow,) then he is bound actually to believe and do it. But if he disclaim it (which is in his power) then he disowns all Interest and Priviledge in Christ, with all the benefits of that Society into which by Baptism he became incorporate.

The Catechism teacheth us out of the Creed, to believe, That God the Son hath redeemed all mankind; which cannot be true (say many) because he died only for the Elect. But they would have no reason to impugn the Churches Doctrine in this particular,

if those Scriptures were impartially considered by them, whereon this Position is founded. A few of which are here barely quoted in the Margin, on

Ezek. 18. 23, 32.
S. Joh. 3. 16.
Heb. 2. 9. Rom. 1.
4, 5. S. Joh. 4. 42.
1 Tim. 4. 10.
S. Joh. 1. 7.
2 S. Pet. 3. 9.

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purpose to shew the ground of the Churches Doctrine, and to guide those to the Topicks of their confutation, who gainsay this, *I believe in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind.* That his death was both sufficient and intentional to save all mankind, but is effectual and efficacious for none but *true Believers*, is a distinction which being wisely and soberly understood, would remove that clashing, which some fancy there is, betwixt the Catechism and the Seventeenth Article of the Church.

Many other Scruples brought against this *excellent Catechism*, are purposely omitted, because they will easily be obviated in its (intended) Exposition. Besides, I have bound my self to observe the *Laws* of an Essay; which I must unavoidably violate, if I should venture upon all such Enlargements as the Subject would naturally endure. I had rather be censured for having said too little than too much.

Deus dedit his quoq; finem.

T H E

THE CONCLUSION.

WE have hitherto examin'd the Age and Advantages of Catechising, and found it to stand above the imputation of being either Novel or Superfluous. So that the only remaining Enquiry concerns its Practice. And this will exact no long disquisition, seeing every Station of men are therein so perfunctory and negligent. Now, as in a common Contagion, no less care must be had of the sound than infirm; and the cure of single persons is required to the removal of the Epidemical Disease: So remissness in Catechising being become a common Malady, it behoves every one to look after amendment, to the end that the Church may be healed of all those Distempers falln upon her through lack of Catechising, and which, if not prevented with a timely interposition

tion thereof, will effect that destruction which they threaten and prognosticate.

And if we look into the persons who are capable herein to be delinquent, they may be reduced either to such as the Church has ordained to administer, or receive this Sovereign Medicine. The former are the Clergy in the whole denomination; for he among them who excepts, deceives both himself and the Church. And notwithstanding that the Clergy in *Sacred Writ*, bear divers appellations, importing the Dignity, Power, Holiness, Excellency, Care, Tenderness, Discretion, and Incommunity of their Functions; yet there is no Title wherein they are more concerned than that of Catechist. For it doth (first) more immediately relate to that Errand on which from the beginning they were sent into the world — *Go teach, &c.* And next, unto the want and supply of those over whom God hath made them Overseers. And while they own themselves to be the Churches Ministers, they should take care to serve her in her own way. For since that was left for paths of their own, and more oyl and labour has been spent in *arguing*, than in *teaching* the Principles

ples of Christianity, it is sadly visible how Religion has thriven among us. For from endeavouring to support Christianity with Buttresses of our own, capitious and malicious Enemies take occasion to conclude that it cannot stand without them. The superstructure seems to be the proper matter of our care, where we believe the Ground-work lies immoveable. And blessed be the Author and Finisher of our Faith, that he has founded it upon a Rock; and maketh it so strong, that the Gates of Hell, the strength and subtilty of her greatest Enemies can never be able to prevail against it. Were we to deal with open Adversaries of the Faith (*Jew, Mahometan, Pagan*) the Ancient Fathers have shewn us an excellent way of procedure; but having to do with Professors, whose evil manners have corrupted their Understanding, not the proving of the verity of the Christian Religion, but the enforcement of its Practice, seems to be the only necessary prescription.

But without being decisive, or stinting the spirit of any man, I hope it may be lawful to wish that the Clergy (out of a true sense of what they are enjoyn'd and bound to obey, by the 59th Canon) would return to the *good old way* of Catechising:

teaching: for since this was shoulder'd out by *Sermoning*, the people have been possessed with strange Whimsies in Religion, and hurried on by the Spirit of Schism and Sedition into all manner of Villanies.

A learned and pious Bishop of this Church doth (as I am told) in his own Person and Cathedral perform this Office. A few such leading Examples would soon raise the sunk Esteem of Catechising, and vindicate it from being thought a Drudgery fit only for children and Curates. And I humbly conjecture, that there is no Clergy-man need think it any lessening of his *Greatness* and *Learning*, to be seen teaching *God's People* after the manner of the Holy Apostles and Primitive Bishops.

Our Ancestors (who knew something as well as we) were not ignorant of the necessity and benefit of what is now most affectionately recommended; when Queen *Elizabeth* made it her 44th Injunction, and King *James* his command, That afternoon-Lectures should be converted into Explanations of some necessary Rudiments of the Catechism; out of a prudent fore-sight that this would be more advantageous to the *People*, than some *ex tempore* irruptions, or enlarging a few
con-

contrived Breviates, upon desultory Texts.

The Laity are the next sort that herein can be faulty, to whose *attentive thoughts* I would most earnestly recommend, first, the serious perusal of the Rubrick adjoyned to the Catechism, together with the 59th Canon: Next, the examination of their knowledge in Religion; that by that former they may know their *Duty*; and by the latter their want of being catechised: And by both be induced to embrace what to their own damage and the *Churches* affliction they have undutifully neglected.

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